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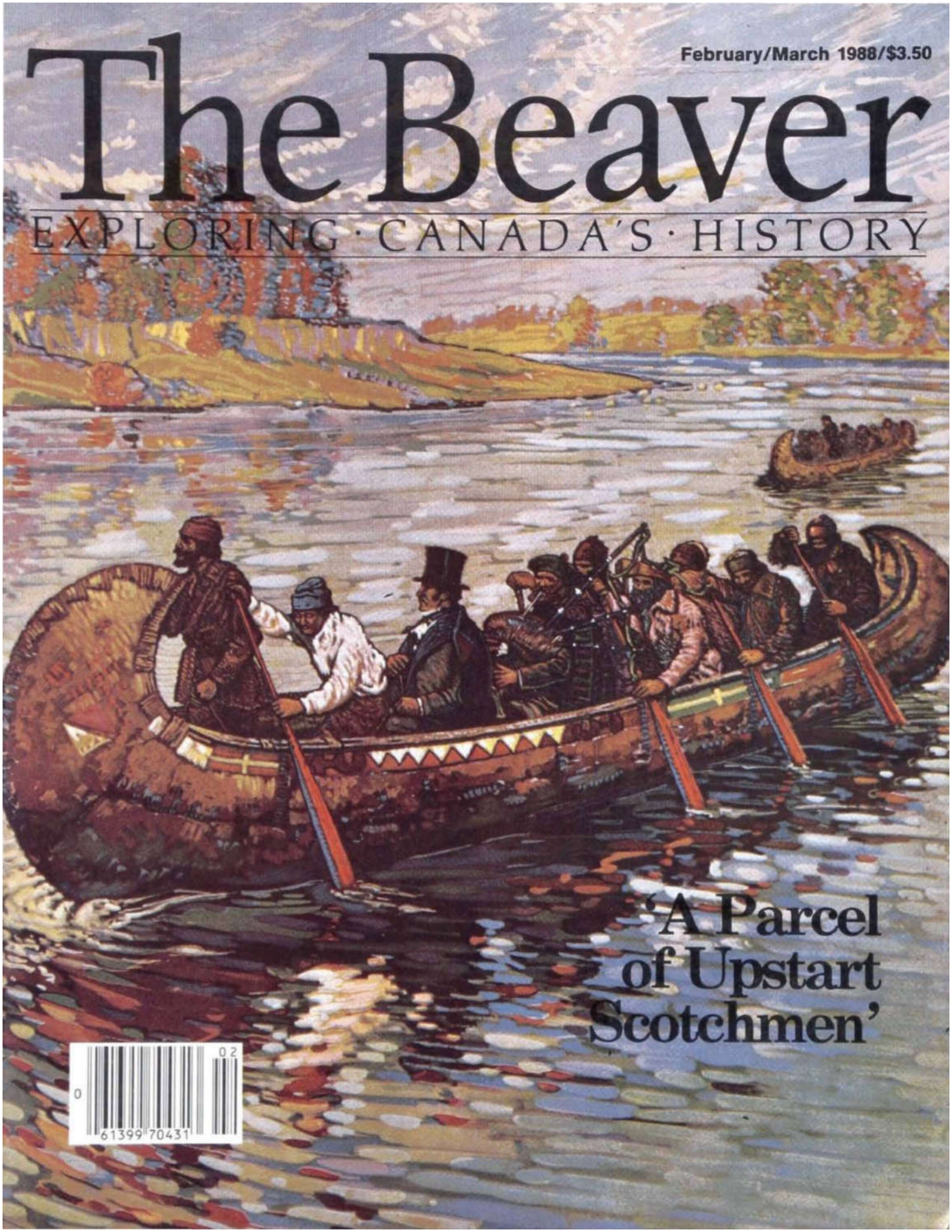

'A Parcel of Upstart Scotchmen'

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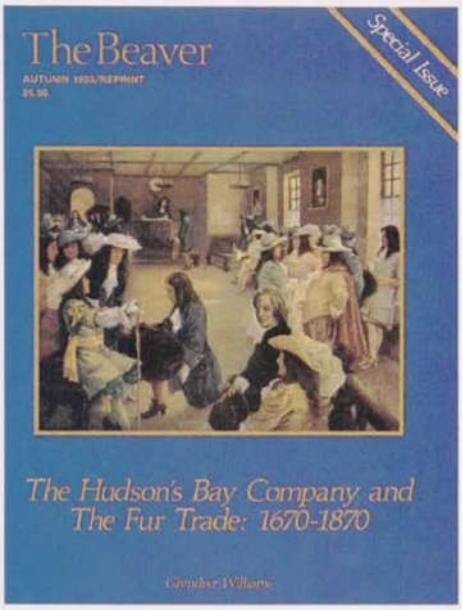

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND THE FUR TRADE 1670-1870

By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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"A Parcel of Upstart Scotchmen"

It would be extremely difficult to imagine the Canadian fur trade without the Scots. To varying degrees, they have been a basic part of its labour force from about 1700 to the present century. Further, before the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company combined in 1821, these firms either could not have survived or would have had very different configurations without their Scottish employees. Scots became a prominent element in the Hudson's Bay Company by the early 1700s. Seven decades later, their fellow countrymen took over the control of the Montreal fur trade after the fall of New France. In both instances, they could aptly be described as old HBC man James Sutherland characterized the men who were running the fur trade in 1840 — as "a parcel of upstart Scotchmen" who found in the trade new outlets for energies and abilities for which there was little scope in their often trouble-ridden homeland.

The Hudson's Bay Company for some decades after its founding in 1670 was a relatively small firm without any substantial backlog of experience in coping with the Canadian arctic and subarctic environments and their native people. It therefore faced continual problems in recruiting men with the requisite hardiness and skills. It also lacked, at first, a consistent wage and hiring policy, tending to draw its employees or "servants" rather unsystematically from the London urban area and surroundings. Its directors soon felt the consequences of these deficiencies. An early HBC governor at York Fort, John Nixon, complained in his report of 1682 that these urban English hands not only kept trying to sue for higher wages; they also brought with them the licentiousness and liquor problems of city life. Nixon urged his London board of directors to turn to rural areas for employees who were "not debauched with the voluptwousness of the city." Specifically he suggested that they "send over yearely 5 lykly country lads of 17 or 18 years of age, and let their tyms be 7 years so that before their tyms be out they will be lusty youngemen, and fit for your service both at sea, and land, and at small wages." Then he presented another seminal idea. He knew a man, he told his superiors, who could "informe youre honoures how yow may get men out of Scotland." For, he added,

> If England can not furnish you with men, Scotland can, for that countrie is a hard country to live in, and poore-mens wages is cheap, they are hardy people both to endure hunger, and could, and are subject to obedience, and I am sure that they will serve for 6 pound pr. years, and be better content, with their dyet than Englishmen.

Nixon's recommendation must have come to receptive minds, for when the London Committee met to hire new hands in March of 1683, four of seven recruits were Scots; and three of these indeed accepted employment at an initial six pounds a year. By the 1690s, French-British military conflicts were causing manpower shortages in England, and in 1693, as a consequence, the Company was seeking about a dozen able Scotsmen aged between twenty and thirty.

Another development rich in future significance occurred about a decade later. HBC ships by 1700 had formed the habit of picking up last-minute supplies from Stromness in the Orkney Islands before starting across the Atlantic. In 1702 the Company ship was instructed to hire ten or twelve young men for the Bay on its stop there. Such hiring soon became customary, and the Company later employed an agent in Stromness to assist in its recruiting of Orkneymen. The seeming success of the policy is suggested by the fact that, by 1799, over three quarters of HBC servants at the Bay posts were from the Orkneys.

Why was there such success with Orkneymen? Contemporary accounts of both the Orkneys and the men themselves provide reasons. The Orkney Islands lie off

the far northern tip of Scotland. Agriculture, sheep-raising, fishing, and the British Navy provided some economic outlets for their workers, but climatic and subsistence conditions were not easy, and resources were limited. Regular HBC wages, received over a period of years in a locality such as northern Canada where there were few temptations to overspend them, allowed many an Orcadian to return home after service in relative opulence. The Company also provided chances for upward mobility within its ranks beyond what the islanders' society could offer. As the Orkney servants gained experience and adapted themselves to Company work, some moved into positions of responsibility as officers, as did William Tomison inland, William Sinclair on the Bay, and several others.

They also brought valuable practical skills with them. A basic literacy, adequate for simple record-keeping, was not uncommon among them, thanks to the Orkney parish schools. And they had often grown up to be experienced with boats and fishing. Their knowledge

FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS THE FUR TRADE SPOKE WITH A PRONOUNCED SCOTTISH ACCENT

By Jennifer S.H. Brown

of boats and boat-building was instrumental in leading the Company to invest substantially in the construction of capacious oar-powered boats for use on the larger waterways between its coastal and inland posts, beginning in the late 1700s when it undertook westward expansion. These distinctive vessels, later known as York boats because of their use on transport routes to York Factory, were certainly based on Orkney-Norse prototypes, with their pointed bows and sterns, their rows of oarsmen, and their use of mast and square sail where water and wind conditions allowed. They compared closely to the small vessels of a thousand years ago that archaeologists have recently been recovering from Danish coastal waters; restored examples of the latter in the Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde near Copenhagen clearly share the same tradition.

Several observers found the Orkney character conducive to Company business success. Being far from urban centres, Orkneymen had not learned "the ways and debaucheries of the town"; so said Joseph Myatt at Albany in 1727, bearing out John Nixon's remarks on "country lads" in 1682. Edward Umfreville, former HBC employee, put on record in 1790 one of the more vivid descriptions of the Orkney servants, commenting, as an Englishman, on how they carried their "Scotch" business conduct almost to excess:

> a close prudent quiet people, strictly faithful to their employers, and sordidly avaricious. When these people are scattered . . . among the Indians . . . their behaviour is conducted with so much propriety, as not only to make themselves esteemed by the natives, and to procure their protection, but they also employ their time in endeavouring to enrich themselves, and their principals, by their diligence and unwearied assiduity.

Such remarks as these are interesting in two ways. They offer some objective indication of Orkney character and behaviour. But they also have a subjective component. By the late 1700s, the Orkneymen were conspicuous as a distinctive ethnic group, and subject to stereotyping and pre-judging by others who saw them as such. Umfreville, in his willingness to sketch them with broad strokes, tells us something about himself as outside observer as well as about the people he observed.

While the Orkneymen were increasingly being viewed and generalized about as a category, we may be sure that they themselves, placed in a multi-ethnic situation for the first time in their experience, were acquiring greater self-consciousness. They already had, of course, kinship and friendship ties and a shared culture before they left home. But once placed amongst Englishmen, a sprinkling of mainland Scots, and Indian bands, and exposed increasingly to contacts with Montreal traders, they certainly became more "tribal"

themselves — aware of their distinctiveness and of their common interests as a group. Indeed, some of them began, at times, to act collectively with economic motives. At York Factory in 1777, there was a report that several Orcadians had entered into "a kind of Combination" to sue for higher wages. In 1811, Governor William Auld at York observed that the Orkneymen were "never to be complained against except in cases where a great number of them happen to have their contracts expiring at the same time then they unite to reduce us to their terms." Most of the time, of course, they were dispersed in small numbers at the different posts; there was no large "company town" where they could organize themselves in a lasting way as a whole. But in smaller groups, they could and sometimes did combine on an ethnic basis.

Later writers also reported the persistence of Orkney separateness and identity well into the nineteenth century, even after its attenuation by Indian and other ethnic admixtures and by a lengthening temporal and geographic remoteness from Orkney roots. Observers of mid-nineteenth century Red River (Winnipeg) commented on the distinctiveness of its Orkney-born settlers as did Alexander Ross in 1856, just as the Orcadians themselves retained a persisting sense of difference. And much more recently, a National Film Board of Canada production, *Fiddlers of James Bay,* demonstrated that some James Bay musicians, of Orkney descent but classed these days as Cree, have actively preserved their Orkney musical heritage. When two of them were brought to the Orkneys to compare their music with that of the Orkney fiddlers, their common heritage was clearly in evidence; in fact the James Bay players had preserved one or two Scottish tunes the Orcadians themselves had lost.

While the Orkneymen were, if only numerically, taking over the Hudson's Bay Company in the late 1700s (very few reached the highest ranks), their mainland countrymen were achieving control of the Montreal fur trade, following the British takeover of New France. The removal of French power left room for the rise of Scottish-born entrepreneurs who were drawn from two different migrant groups. First, there were numbers of Scots who had come to North America with the British military forces. Identified with British military success, and sometimes rewarded for their part in it by grants of seigneuries, they or their sons (for example, Alexander, son of Malcolm Fraser of Murray Bay) moved into Montreal's commerce, and particularly the fur trade, as a business in which fortunes could still be made. Reinforcing their ranks slightly later were Scots who had left their homeland to come to the American colonies. The outbreak of the American Revolution led many New York Scots to join other loyalists in a trek northward to places where British sympathies and attachments were welcomed. The parents of such important traders as Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Duncan Cameron, Simon Fraser, and Duncan Campbell were all displaced northwards, among others. Political troubles helped to dislodge the Scottish trading firm of Phyn, Ellice, and Company from its home in Schenectady, New York, to Montreal and London. The Ellice, Forsyth, and Richardson families linked with that company produced nine sons and grandsons who became active in the Montreal fur business.

Perhaps the most important of these migrants from New York was a Scot who left Albany just before the revolution broke out. Simon McTavish from Invernesshire came to Montreal in 1775, and later became the driving force behind the North West Company. Having begun as a lowly apprentice, and dying in 1804 as a rich businessman and benefactor to his clan chief and to numbers of poorer relations, he was a good exemplar of the "Upstart Scotchmen" to whom the fur trade gave such opportunities in those years.

One striking feature about McTavish and his fellow Scottish migrants was the way in which they forged networks among themselves and with other Scottish kinsmen and associates. They were entrepreneurial not only in commerce but socially, cultivating mutual ties that were multi-functional and highly effective for business success. Senior partners such as McTavish brought into the trade their younger brothers, nephews, sons, or cousins, often cultivating clan links with

A York boat and crew under sail, a product of Orcadian seafaring traditions.

their home regions of Scotland and encouraging new migrants to venture across the Atlantic. William McGillivray, of later North West Company fame, and his two brothers all came into the business by virtue of their being the sons of McTavish's sisters; assorted cousins were also recruited. In 1798, McTavish brought into the company John George McTavish, son of the clan chief, as a clerk; and as John George rose in stature, he influenced three of his own nephews to enter the fur trade. Such networks of male kin, often linked through wives and mothers, created fur trade genealogies of considerable breadth if not depth, linking Scottish and Scottish-origin families all the way from the Highlands to the shores of British Columbia.

As already mentioned, the Orkneymen of the old (pre-1821) HBC found in their New World setting a sense of ethnic identity and separateness of which they were previously less strongly aware. A parallel development certainly occurred for the Scottish Nor'Westers as they gained footholds in the multi-ethnic setting of Montreal and the fur trade. The Scotland which had been home and centre of the universe was now geographically remote, and of course it was a relatively meaningless entity to the French, Indian, and native Canadian groups involved in the fur trade. Migrant Highlanders already had ample reason to be sensitive about maintaining their selfhood and culture, given their history of facing English incursions into Scotland. But perhaps just as important was the Scots' new exposure to the phenomenon of other outsiders' indifference and lack of common heritage or understandings in the Canadian setting, and the novel experience of living in a land that seemed in many ways less "civilized", less advanced than their own.

The Highlanders seemed to respond to this situation in two ways. First, the Scottish expatriates' ties with the English sometimes became relatively strong: despite old hostilities, they found common interests in their new setting. They had already, of course, shared the victory over New France, and they shared too a business orientation toward London as the financial centre that provided the underpinnings for their trade. These connections were not only military and economic, but became cultural and social as well. When Simon McTavish, essential Highlander that he was, arranged in his will for the education of his four young children, he stipulated neither a Scottish nor a Montreal schooling; rather, all were "to be removed to England for their education". And later, when Highlander George Simpson entered the fur trade, he did so through the London connections of his Scottish relatives, as did some of his contemporaries. Monty Python to the contrary, Englishmen were not converted into Scotsmen; but the Scots in the Canadian fur trade were building English connections that helped them prosper and gave scope for the Scottish ethnic domination of that enterprise.

The other Highlander response to the social mosaic

Public Archives of Canada

William McGillivray (left) and Simon McTavish (right): Strong family connections.

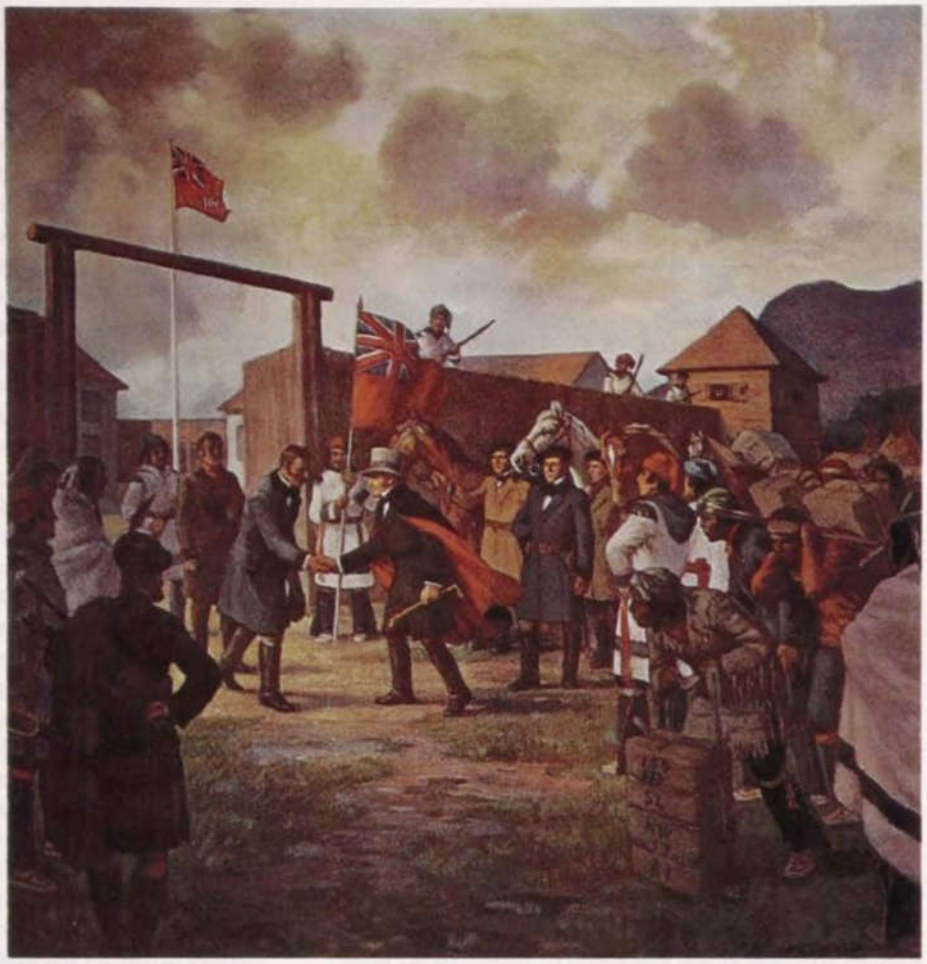
that the fur trade presented was to cultivate Scottish pride and identity as such: and this indeed occurred, to degrees rather in excess of what one might have found among Scots who had never left their "native glens". As expatriate Scots became the elite officers of the fur trade, they found scope to indulge their nostalgia for their homeland and their pride of heritage, having the social and material resources to do so. Governor George Simpson's employment of a Highland bagpiper to escort him on his voyages around the Indian country is only one concrete manifestation of the load of cultural baggage that the Highlanders carried about to remind themselves — and others — of their distinctive heritage and identity.

Vivid examples of how the fur trade Scots' pride of homeland grew and flourished in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and of how that pride in fact became a defining characteristic of the Hudson's Bay Company's elite class, come from the prolific correspondence of James Hargrave. Hargrave, although not quite a Highlander himself, strongly defined himself as Scottish, and successfully assimilated and affiliated himself to his Highland officer colleagues between the mid-1820s and early 1840s as he rose through the ranks. He entered the North West Company as a clerk in 1820, just before its merger with the Hudson's Bay Company. Retained as a promising young officer (unlike the many who were discharged as redundant after the union), Hargrave, as a good observer, could not fail to notice how his Scottish Nor'Wester superiors persisted in dominating the higher ranks, even under a new company name. To rise in the business it was necessary not only to perform one's job competently, but to cultivate the favourable notice and patronage of these Highlanders. Hargrave did so assiduously from his strategic post at the depot of York Factory, proving himself to be, in modern bureaucratic parlance, a reliable communicator and facilitator, and at the same time, a true Scot. Some Highlanders might have questioned his affinity with themselves since he bore no clan name, and indeed one English-born correspondent wryly noted this problem as a possible handicap to his promotion. The Reverend William Cockran, writing to Hargrave on 9 August 1832, observed, "I begin to think that your name will have to be changed, into Mc-argrave. If you had had a Mc- before it, I have little doubt, but that it would have done you real service." But through the friendly sentiments of such colleagues as George Simpson, John Dougald Cameron, and J.G. McTavish, Hargrave eventually did rise, to chief trader rank in 1833, and to a chief factorship in 1844.

In his personal orientations as in his career Hargrave placed much emphasis on the Scottish connection. His letterbooks show that by the mid-1820s, his attachment to homeland was a central focus on his whole scheme of values, influencing the course he charted for himself in his personal life, and also his other judgments in a variety of spheres.

The home tie was particularly prominent in Hargrave's contemplations about marriage. By late 1826, he had already decided not to follow the lead of the many fur traders who had taken native wives in the Canadian northwest; fur trade marriages according to the custom of the country, as they were known, were unfortunate entanglements, and the native women could not compare to those he had left behind. In a letter to his uncle, James Mitchell, he wrote that he was saving his money for "when I return an old and weather beaten Bachelor to Scotland some 10 or 15 years hence",

> and till I see the fair haired lasses of Scotland again a Bachelor I am determined to remain, — tho' when



A. Sherriff Scott. Hudson's Bay Company

James Douglas greets Governor Simpson, Fort Victoria, 1828.

that time comes I fear — I fear these giddy nymphs that skip about my native valley will be apt to turn up their pretty noses and tell me my day for catching their fancy is gone bye — that I scent of the Indian Wigwam and have forgot how to court them in Broad Scotch.

To a fellow trader in a letter of 12 July 1827 he restated his intent: "With a view of returning again to my native land without burden or incumbrance I propose if possible to keep clear from all matrimonial fetters in this country." And in 1835, he assured his mother, "You may yet see me with a wife, but she will be one from the Old Country and one which your own particularity will consider worthy of me; — or else I remain as I am."

More than simple nostalgia or romanticism lay behind these pronouncements. In the fur trade country, the decade of 1825-1835 was one of great social change. Older traders, both the HBC men and the Nor'Westers, had regularly formed unions with women of the Indian country, and although these alliances were of varying durability and variously regarded, they were often viewed seriously as marriage by native communities and by many of the whites involved. For whites with strong home attachments who were concerned with their social standing and respectability, however, native women were not so attractive as wives, especially once the founding of Red River set the scene for the entry of white women into the northwest. Hargrave, George Simpson, and their colleagues did not practice sexual abstinence in the fur trade country. But when it came to relationships acceptable as marriage, questions of social status and even of race were very much in their minds, causing several officers to reject or set aside native mates, or at least to vacillate and agonize, as did Chief Factor John Stuart, over whether to take on native attachments, or maintain them, once formed.

In about 1830, Hargrave saw three of his Scottish HBC superiors take the decisive step of travelling to Britain to acquire respectable young wives on rather short notice — in two cases, no notice at all, as George Simpson's and J.G. McTavish's native families found out to their shock. Other officers of the period followed

Hudson's Bay Company

Letitia Hargrave: A bride from home.

their example or were at least considering such steps seriously, abetted in a backhanded way by newly arrived European churchmen who promulgated the view that the fur trade customary marriages were not marriages until church-sanctified, and could or should be set aside if not blessed by the Church. Hargrave was impressed by the examples set by some of his most respected superiors. In a letter of 1 December 1830 he noted with great interest the marriage of McTavish to "a Scottish Lady" and added, "this influx of white faces has cast a still deeper shade over the faces of our Brunetts in the eyes of many." Later on, McTavish himself encourged Hargrave to follow his own marital lead. Expressing the hope that Hargrave would soon meet his new wife, he went on in a letter of 18 December 1833 to tell his younger friend, "when you settle I wish *you such a wife* and I have no hesitation that then you will attain a knowledge of the terms domestic Bliss and Happiness."

That wish was fulfilled, with McTavish's help. Six years later, while on furlough to Scotland, Hargrave became affianced to McTavish's niece, Letitia Mactavish; they were married in 1840, and Letitia joined her husband at York Factory for the next several years. Hargrave was now in a position to tell his own junior colleagues, "go thou and do likewise." Writing to Hector McKenzie on 10 December 1842, he stated firmly what McKenzie's marriage choice should be: "No Halfbreeds mind, but a genuine nymph of our own native mountains must be the choice . . . so soon as a slip of parchment [commission as officer] rewards . . . your solid and steady labors in this country."

As the HBC Scottish elite plotted the courses of their domestic lives, then, Scotland became not just a homeland to be nostalgically missed, and not just a heritage from the past. It was very much present, at the core of their relationships with one another, and as a place to secure wives and thus reinforce social ties. These bonds with Scotland did more, however; they also conferred status. Those who could afford to maintain such bonds (and they were expensive, involving travel, reciprocal obligations to Scottish kin, and the like) reinforced their social positions. They managed to segregate themselves from the lower levels of society that the natives of the fur trade had come to represent — and specifically from commitments to dusky native women who were insufficiently christianized and educated, and whose virtue had been (thanks in part to the activities of these men themselves) inadequately protected.

Scotland and its women represented, in contrast, the best in life. When trader Cuthbert Cumming asked Hargrave for a description of their colleague James McMillan's new Scottish wife in 1831, he expected to hear her praised, for, he added, "I understand she is from Lochchabor [Lochaber] famous in times gone by for the beauty of its women and the chivalry of the men" (1 Mar. 1831). "Our Scottish Ladies" were also admired for "their firmness and courage" in facing transplantation from their beloved homeland to the rigours of life in northern Canada (Hargrave, 1 Dec. 1840). At least one old Scottish trader after Hargrave's marriage favourably compared Letitia Hargrave at York Factory to the less successfully adapted English wife of officer Duncan Finlayson, being impressed "that the Blue Bell of Scotland should bloom and vegetate so beautifully in the frigid zone of York Factory whilst the English Rose from the banks of the Thames should form rather a failure in red river" (J.D. Cameron writing to Hargrave on 5 May 1843).

To these men, Scotland also became, in its remoteness, the epitome of "the Civilized World", while life in the fur trade country was often equated with degradation, a falling away from high culture and the good life. Those Scots who acquired respectable educated wives from their homeland and thus created (at considerable cost) islands of civilization in the northwest, prided themselves on the accomplishment. James Hargrave, admiring the "carefully finished" education of his Letitia (8 Sept. 1838 to William Lockie), wrote disparagingly of another Scottish-born woman, the wife of trader Donald Ross, who had "resided in this [the Indian] country since her girlhood" and thus offered "the strongest contrast to what my Letitia is and would

be — Deficient in mind and natural taste, uneducated and unpolished, — she has sunk to the same grade as her brown sisters around her." In comparison, Mrs. James McMillan from Lochaber, mentioned earlier, had "preserved during her whole residence here the same delicacy of feeling a good education gave her in Scotland. — Kind to the native women and children she yet maintains her original rank among them and seeks for society only in her own family."

In looking back over the roles that Scotland played in the hearts and minds of her fur trader expatriates, one can make certain generalizations and comparisons. Whether for the Orkneymen of the old Hudson's Bay Company or the Montreal Scots after the conquest of New France, the homeland in the distance became strongly present in a new sense, as the shared heritage on the basis of which their community could be maintained and ethnic boundaries firmly drawn. (This kind of development is of course commonplace for migrant ethnic groups in many times and places.)

For the Scottish officers of the North West Company and their compatriot successors in the HBC after 1821, however, Scotland took on a still more special role, because they had the resources to give it one, and because Highland clan solidarities, networks, and pride, maintained against the English, had already generated a strong sense of being a distinct community. Scotland in its absence, became more important to them than if they had not travelled abroad to find themselves in places and among people for which they had less regard. Standing in sharp contrast to the Canadian northwest, Scotland was the locus of a respected ancestral culture, of warmly regarded places and associations — in short, of civilization as they conceived of it. Many of their kin and descendants carried on these sentiments, particularly in centres such as Glengarry County in eastern Ontario where their numerical domination of the area helped them to maintain Scottish customs and ties.

We might conclude with an intriguing query: did these Scottish-oriented fur traders in fact become Canadian, and if so, in what senses? For the Orkneymen of the Old Hudson's Bay Company and for other old HBC Scots (mostly Lowlanders), the answer is in most cases clear. Their company, before the founding of Red River, had no settlements where former servants could retire, and was hostile to any thought of having non-company populations accumulate and possibly conduct private trade in its territories. The great majority of Orkneymen, whether or not they had native families, were shipped home at the end of their useful terms, with no possibility of Canadianization. The small proportion who stayed after 1812 or so, taking their families to Red River when that option opened, retained recollections of Orkney ties. But their descendants also had maternal roots in North America, and might even be classed as and identify themselves as Indian, as do the James Bay Cree who still play Orkney tunes on Scottish fiddles. Canadian identity came late as an option to Orcadian heirs in the northwest, and was not necessarily attractive or relevant. Some Manitobans of part-Orkney descent, for example, have classed themselves more as Rupertslanders than as Scots, in memory of the old name of the HBC territories. And for some, Orkney itself remained central.

The Scottish Nor'Westers, compared to the old HBC Scots, appear far more Canadian in their residence patterns and in their company connections. Most retired to the Montreal area, and they entered the fur trade through the medium of an enterprise based on Canadian soil. Yet it is clear that Scottish consciousness and affiliations remained as dominant influences in their lives, being reinforced by the cultural ideals and social pressures they felt during the changes of the 1820s to 1840s.

Were the North West Company Scots Canadians then? Yes, not only in residence and career location, but in another paradoxical sense as well. Canadians seem to have a way of looking elsewhere than Canada for their identity, being dubious about whether Canadian-ness can in itself be a basis for that identity, and in this respect, these fur traders were very Canadian indeed. Nor'Westers who worked for decades in a Montreal-based business and lived and died on Canadian soil consistently proclaimed their Scottishness, as have many of their Canadian descendants after them, in the face of the Canadian facets of their lives, and in the face of the fact that in speech and countless other ways, they were also growing apart from and away from their Scottish forebears.

But the Scots Nor'Westers were also Canadians in another and very positive sense, despite their rhetoric; their activities and contributions were fundamentally Canadian, basic to the building of that nation. It was certainly they who, much more than most Canadians, laid the groundwork for forging Eastern and Western Canada into one. Their explorations, their associations with Western native peoples, their involvement in a business that was essentially based on Canadian east-west and transcontinental ties, all provided early models for what Confederation would be or might have been. As these Nor'Westers' life histories are written and interpreted, and as their homes in Eastern Canada are restored and increasingly drawn to public attention, these men should not be viewed only as the representatives or protegés of one sometimes overly nostalgic expatriate ethnic group. They were Canadians too, in their growing perception of northern North America as an entity drawn together by the spreading network of their economic activities and social bonds. ♦

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Fothergill

Canada's Pioneer Naturalist Emerges From Oblivion

By Elaine Theberge

Over 150 years ago, Charles Fothergill, a pioneer naturalist of southern Ontario, wrote the first nature column to appear in an Upper Canada newspaper. His studies of animal life were among the earliest in the province, and his paintings and sketches of birds and animals showed the keenness of his observations.

Fothergill was convinced that the study of nature would result in a deeper understanding of human life. In his *Essay on the Philosophy, Study, and Use of Natural History* (1813), he said:

> . . . . The man who surveys the vast field of Nature with an eye of true philosophical inquiry; who devotes a portion of his time to the studies of the principles which influence, or govern, the motions of animated beings, however minute they may be, will not only derive infinite pleasure . . . but will gain the only means of discovering the object . . . of his creation. . . . But knowledge must be ever progressive . . . . (man) has no right to injure or wantonly destroy any animal, as each is a useful link in the vast chain of creation.

To many pioneers, this was a novel idea. To them, trees were to be destroyed to make room for their homes and fields. This was usually done without regard for the wildlife inhabitants. A century and a half since Fothergill expressed his philosophy of conservation, we are still striving to accomplish some of his objectives.

Charles Fothergill's contributions to the life of Upper Canada were also in the fields of politics, art, and writing. As King's Printer, Member of the House of Assembly, editor of the *Upper Canada Gazette* and other papers, and as an artist, he was a figure of importance in the young nation.

Born in England in 1782, Fothergill was a member of a famous Yorkshire family of ornithologists, scientists and artists. With such a background it is not surprising that he was given encouragement when he showed intense interest in nature study. Before his eighteenth birthday he had published *Ornithologia Britannica*, listing 301 species of British birds. At the age of twenty-one he wrote *The Wanderer: or a Collection of Original Tales and Essays Founded upon Facts*, and ten years later, his *Essay on the Philosophy, Study, and Use of Natural History* was published.

Throughout his early life he travelled to remote parts of the British Isles recording his observations of birds and animals. This work challenged him to seek a wider field for his investigations, and he decided to write a natural history of the British Empire. This was at a time when people of the old world were fascinated by early accounts of the birds and animals of North America, and Fothergill chose this part of the Empire in which to begin his studies.

In July 1816 Fothergill, with his wife and two infant sons, boarded the sailing ship *William*. The eight-week trip across the Atlantic and up the St. Lawrence was evidently an exciting adventure for the naturalist. While other passengers huddled below deck, Fothergill was out making weather observations for his diary and, as they sailed into the Gulf, sketching fishes and birds.

The wild shores and barren mountains of Newfoundland first appeared on 13 August. Several whales were seen along the coast, and in the air were storm petrels, herring gulls, auks, and ducks.

When he landed at Quebec, the trees were beginning to change to autumn colours. Although impatient to begin his observations, he first had to arrange his busi-

Royal Ontario Museum

Charles Fothergill, The Bridge Over Smith's Creek, Port Hope, water colour over pencil, 1819.

ness affairs at Quebec and Montreal. It was not until early February that he was free to start his research. Because of the winter season, he resolved to leave his family in Montreal and to travel to York in Upper Canada, alone and in an open sleigh. In 1817 this was in itself a feat.

The roads were, in many places, little more than wilderness trails cut through dense forests. For a stranger to the country such a journey required courage and determination. The way Fothergill looked upon this trip is recorded in the first entry of his Canadian diary. He wrote with characteristic good humour.

> Left Montreal at 10 o'clock this morning, drawn by Young Toby, ridiculed by everyone as incapable of drawing myself, equipage and luggage to the end of my journey. My carriage, one of my own invention, built upon a common Canadian traineau (Sleigh) bottom . . . boxed up on the sides and ends and with a locked receptacle for my portmanteau. . . . The 2 shafts black and the body bright green, inside yellow, total cost including iron work but exclusive of harness 20 sh[illings].

He and Young Toby bumped along rough, icy tracks, through the unfamiliar countryside:

> . . . The Country is beautiful and romantic even at this season — what might it be in summer — the wildest and finest scenery I have beheld.

No detail escaped his notice and his account sparkles with observations of birds he recognized: finches, buntings, blue jays, owls, and tits. He was especially interested in the Three-toed woodpecker: "a bird so scarce in Europe."

After he left Cornwall, a winter storm blanked out the narrow road. Fothergill, bewildered by the swirling whiteness, his eyes inflamed and almost blinded, his face terribly frozen, was nearly forced to give up his journey. Young Toby (young in name only), his shoulder rubbed raw in pulling the sleigh through the ice and snow, was scarcely able to carry on. With difficulty they continued to Kingston where Fothergill was able to see a doctor. After a few days rest, and the purchase of a better-fitting harness for his horse, he continued his journey.

He found more settlements as he travelled along the shoreline of Lake Ontario west of Kingston, but the road cut through heavy forests which closed about the villages. In the valley of the Trent River, Fothergill noticed that

> The river at its mouth did not appear to me more than a quarter of a mile at the most. . . . I crossed it on the ice. Having gained the opposite or Western Bank I descended a hill and entered into a thick forest of very fine Fir, Pine, Timber trees — some of the Pines were indeed magnificent from 100 to 180 and occasionally, perhaps to 200 feet in height. . . . I plainly entered what might strictly be termed alluvial lands with considerable and regular

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

Portrait of Charles Fothergill, aged 53.

> undulation and a sandy soil. Tracks of wild animals numerous . . . . the road was very rough and bad owing to the drifting snow and fallen trees.

When he reached the village of Smith's Creek, his interest in the countryside deepened. In spite of the greater part of the coast being "one continual forest", he saw the possibility of an excellent harbour being made, where lake schooners could come in. There were about fifteen houses, two of which were inns. He stopped at Choat's Inn, in the village that would later become his home.

A severe storm made it impossible to proceed with his trip westward, so he spent several days exploring the region north of the village.

> Black squirrels are not uncommon in this neighbourhood. . . . An evening walk in a Canadian Forest when the weather is gloomy produces striking and solemn effects on the mind as the wind rises in deep long-drawn sighs through lofty tops of the pines . . . sometimes rising to a deep howl whilst the falling of ancient trunks no longer able to bear the storm crashing down others in their way creates a noise which can be heard reverberated in echoes from the depth of the forest on every side.

On his second day at Smith's Creek, he rode his horse to Rice Lake. He found no farms farther than six miles from Lake Ontario, and there were very few settlers even closer to the village. The twelve miles to Rice Lake varied from deep forest to some open areas. He lost his way several times but reached the lake in the late afternoon; he noted in his diary that it was a "vast uninhabited solitude, an extraordinary silence prevailed". The potential for settlement of the area was uppermost in his mind as he retraced his way to Smith's Creek in the growing darkness.

He resumed his journey to York (Toronto), and one month after leaving Montreal, he crossed the Don River and entered what he called

> this miserable apology for a metropolis consisting of about a Dozen houses clustered about Jordan's Inn called the York City Hotel — found it tolerably comfortable.

One of the other guests at the hotel described him as "tall, dark, handsome, well-educated".

Fothergill lost no time applying (March 1817) to Lt. Gov. Sir Francis Gore for 1200 acres of land on the south shore of Rice Lake near the mouth of the Otonabee River. He stated that this would be valuable for back country settlement, with water communication to Lake Ontario by means of Smith's Creek where an excellent harbour could be located.

Before the end of 1817 Fothergill had established his home near Smith's Creek. He was the first postmaster of this village which was called Toronto until 16 June 1819, when John Beverley Robinson, Attorney General, issued a notice giving it the name of Port Hope.

Shortly after he was made postmaster, he was appointed to the Land Board for the District of Newcastle. His next political appointment was that of King's

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

Red-breasted Nuthatch (above) and Peregrine Falcon (across), painted by Fothergill. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was blown into the shrouds of the sailing ship William in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and was sketched by Fothergill.

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

A White-fronted Tern. Fothergill's bird pictures are noted for their clarity and detail.

Printer in 1822. At the same time, he became editor of the *Upper Canada Gazette* and the *Weekly Register.* The first nature column to appear in a Canadian newspaper was written by Fothergill for the *Weekly Register.*

Three years after he became King's Printer he was elected to represent the County of Durham in the House of Assembly during the 9th and 10th Parliaments of Upper Canada. He aligned himself with the moderate reformers.

In several areas he moved ahead of his times: he originated a bill for the establishment of Agricultural Societies in Upper Canada; he wished to establish a museum to safeguard specimens of natural history; and forty-two years before Confederation he proposed the establishment of a federal government in Canada. He founded the first Literary and Historical Society in Upper Canada.

Although he pushed forward ideas which he thought advanced the development of the country, he did not hesitate to express opposition to measures he considered radical. He voted against the government on one such occasion and was dismissed from his office as King's Printer. It was an anomaly to permit the King's Printer to hold a seat in the Legislative Assembly.

His political activities did not distract him from his main interest — to record and preserve the natural history of the country through his writings, paintings, and the acquisition of specimens of mammals and birds.

He wrote *A Sketch of the state of Upper Canada,* (York, U.C., 1822), and in 1831 he started contributing a nature column to the *Cobourg Star and Newcastle Advertiser.* These were signed "Atticus" and the source of much of the material was the countryside around his property on Rice Lake. Here he had built a lodge on a beautiful point near the mouth of the Otonabee River. He named the house Castle Fothergill, and the location was known as Fothergill Point

Charles Fothergill, The Log House on Rice Lake, 1819.

until 1897, when it was changed to "Jubilee Point" in honour of Queen Victoria's jubilee.

Because of his busy life, Fothergill and his family divided their time between their place on Rice Lake, their home in Port Hope, and a residence in York. Fothergill's first wife died in 1822. In 1825 he married Eliza Richardson. They had seven children in addition to three sons from the former marriage.

Fothergill's writings reflect his ability to make detailed observations, his keen attention to minutiae, and his ability to express his own pleasure in his work. One of his "Atticus" articles was about bullfrogs:

> Bullfrogs are very numerous and formidable about Rice Lake. The noise they make in the still nights previous to rain or thunder and lightening is really tremendous and may be compared to the bellowings of a thousand bulls.

He watched a Pileated Woodpecker working on a hemlock tree. He estimated that the bark that was removed in from ten to fifteen minutes would fill a half-bushel basket.

The subjects for his newspaper articles ranged from flying squirrels to the habits of mud turtles. He wrote an essay on the mammals of Canada in which he described 168 species. The Natural History Society of Montreal awarded a silver medal to him for this work.

Paintings by Fothergill are of value from an historical viewpoint. *Port Hope in 1819* is thought to be the earliest known picture of that area. His watercolour subjects covered many birds and mammals. The first organization of artists in Upper Canada (Toronto Society of Artists) was begun in 1834. The members were both professional and amateur, and included among them were Paul Kane, Captain Bonnycastle, and Charles Fothergill. The catalogue listed 196 pictures, contributed by thirteen associated artists and eleven honorary exhibitors. Fothergill exhibited ten watercolours.

An important part of his nature work was collecting and preserving specimens of mammals and birds. He intended this collection to form the nucleus of a museum of natural history such as those he had seen on visits to Philadelphia and New York. In 1830, and again in 1835, he spearheaded proposals for a "Lyceum of Natural History and the Fine Arts in the City of Toronto, Upper Canada".

> The period has arrived when the Province of Upper Canada should take its proper station amongst the enlightened communities of North America by forming an exhibition of its resources and a display of natural production. It is the only large section of the continent without its public museum and place to deposit specimens of Natural History. . . . Too much cannot be said in praise of the study of Natural History. . . . It is gratifying to notice that in all parts of the civilized world men are becoming more

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

A surviving case of Fothergill's birds.

> and more attached to the pursuits of nature . . . and it is greatly hoped that Upper Canada, so richly endowed, will no longer remain without its Public Institute of Natural History.

In anticipation of government support, Fothergill rented space in Chewett's Building on King Street in which to store his specimens of birds and mammals, as well as some of his paintings. Other contributors were urged to bring to these temporary quarters any specimens they wished to donate.

The project to build the museum had the support of Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne and his successor, Sir Francis Bond Head. A grant of land was given for the building and grounds on the Government Reserve between the Garrison and Farr's Brewery. In today's city, this would be on the south side of Queen Street near Strachan Avenue. Plans for the building were ambitious and the structure was to be patterned after the Parthenon in Athens. An effort was made to raise money by subscription, and funds were secured for all but two thousand dollars of the cost of the building. The project had to be abandoned.

An early historian, Henry Scadding *(Toronto of Old)* said that ". . . (the museum) was probably too bold in its conception and too advanced to be justly appreciated. . . . Mr. Fothergill was a man of great intelligence . . . and an experienced naturalist." Scadding recounts seeing works by the English naturalist Thomas Bewick that included a Horned Owl which was drawn from a specimen supplied by Charles Fothergill.

Unfortunately, most of Fothergill's remarkable collection of natural history specimens was destroyed by fire shortly after his death. In his plans for a provincial museum he was a man ahead of his time and it was left to others to make his dream come true.

Charles Fothergill died in 1840. Most of the manuscripts which formed the important part of his work were, for many years, believed lost and were only located after 1931. It was then that his contribution to the study of natural history was revealed. Ten years later, an article in the *Canadian Historical Review* (December 1944) by ornithologist James Baillie brought to the attention of the public the work of Fothergill as a naturalist. Mr. Baillie said that there was no question that Fothergill was

> . . . the pioneer naturalist of southern Ontario and the care with which he made his notes stamps him as one of the most important of the early naturalists of Canada. The difficulties under which he laboured must have been tremendous. There was little literature pertaining to Canadian animals, he did not have the advantage of kindred souls with whom to associate, he lacked camera and binoculars, and his means of transportation would be limited to horse (and buggy or sleigh), boat, or foot.

Fothergill's Canadian descriptions concern 186 birds, 105 mammals, 27 fishes, 15 reptiles, and 2 amphibians. These notes are found in sixteen holograph manuscript volumes which were located between 1931 and 1944. Several other volumes have been found since that date and all are now in archives and libraries. It was Baillie's opinion that since Fothergill's work came to light at such a late date, he did not "influence the development of natural history studies in Ontario. Potentially, however, he was of great importance. As a naturalist, and illustrator of animals, he ranked with the best of his period".

Although prominent as a legislator, newspaper publisher, and artist, it is in the field of natural history that Charles Fothergill deserves to be best remembered.

Today's naturalist will recognize his philosophy of man's place in nature as he expressed it so well in his early writings:

> It should be an important object in the pursuit of Natural History to ascertain the true relation which one animal bears to another, and their utility in the great scale of creation. A knowledge which can only be obtained by long observation and unwearied investigation.

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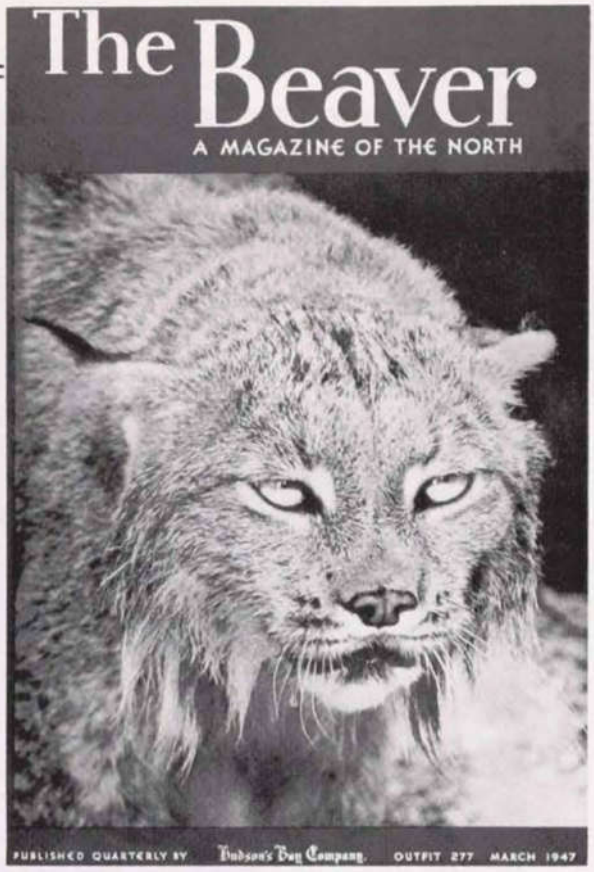
Elaine Theberge is an Oshawa freelance writer. She is co-author, with her husband, of several works on Canadian history.

Richard Harrington Remembers



In 1946 I got permission from the Hudson's Bay Company to take photographs at the HBC experimental fur farm at Bird's Hill, near Winnipeg, which was under the direction of W.O. Douglas.

There I climbed into a small cage with a very angry lynx. He snarled and slavered as I got a closeup of his head. That photo was used on the cover of the Company's prestigious quarterly, *The Beaver* in March 1947.

This opened a door to me which is, in fact, still open. My most recent article for the magazine appeared in the Autumn 1985 issue.

In addition to meeting the editor, Clifford Wilson, I was introduced to various Company officers at Hudson's Bay House.

Next, Mr. Wilson gave me an assignment in 1947 to visit the HBC post at remote Duck Lake in northwestern Manitoba, now closed. I was to travel with the few Chipewyan Indians there and document their lives.

The images taken then and the comprehensive journal became the property of the Hudson's Bay Company and were used in several issues of *The Beaver.*

From then on, it was "roses all the way", as editor Wilson chuckled.

It became a very friendly situation. There was always a place to spread my sleeping bag in the living room of HBC posts wherever I went in the Arctic, and also meals shared with the many bachelors who managed the remote and isolated posts. Only a very few white women then lived in the Arctic.

Among those managers were the legendary "Arctic men" such as L.A. Learmonth, John Stanners, Bill Calder, Sandy Lunan, Leo Manning, Ches Russell, Darcy Munro, J.W. Anderson, Henry Voisey and Ernie Lyall, to name only a few.

While I always paid my Eskimo guide the customary tariff plus an allowance for his family while he was absent, plus food rations for his 10-12 dogs and sundry other items, I was a guest in transportation and at Arctic posts most of the time.

With Company hospitality and cooperation, I made five long dogteam trips during five winters, travelling with Eskimo companions, between 1948 and 1952. At times the HBC's Arctic Division Manager, P.A.C. Nichols, made it possible for me to fly in a Company plane with veteran pilot Al Snyder.

In those days, that meant more than can be readily understood today. Some posts saw only a tiny supply boat or the Company plane once a year, and not every year. Some years they didn't make it.

To a couple of young bachelors living together for two to three years I was a welcome intrusion. For me, it was an opportunity to clean up and rest between difficult trips during which I lived in igloos, documenting the Eskimo way of life, a life now practically vanished. At times, a bottle or two of HBC overproof rum was a welcome gift. Once we had slushy rum. That proved how cold the weather really was.

Richard Harrington

In later years, as I crisscrossed Canada with my writer wife Lyn by car, HBC personnel officers asked me to photograph their staff whenever I came upon an HBC store off the beaten path. Thus we came to have many pleasant encounters from Sept Iles, Quebec, to Kitwanga and Telegraph Creek, B.C.

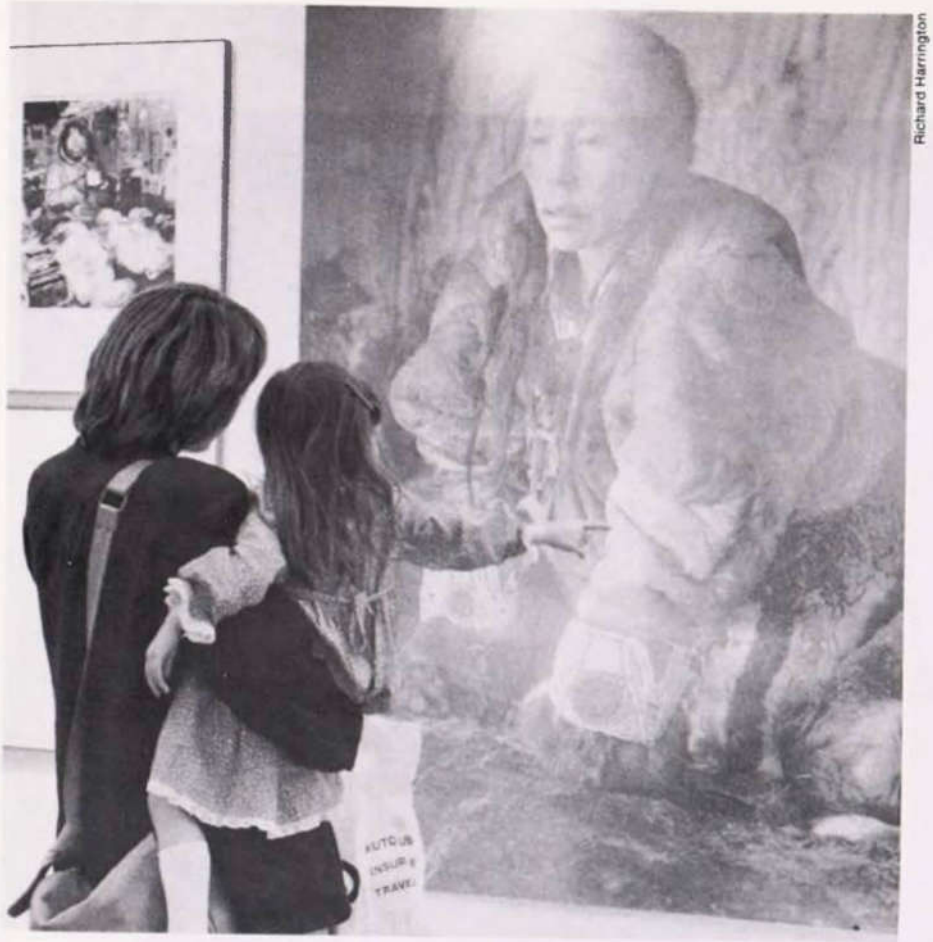
My latest article in *The Beaver,* Over the Tundra to Wilberforce Falls (Autumn 1985), was of special interest to me. The journey started from Bathurst Inlet Lodge, once an HBC post. Glenn and Trish Warner of Yellowknife bought the post buildings and refurbished them into an attractive hostelry catering largely to nature-lovers. Now I slept in a cosy bed instead of in a sleeping bag on the floor as I did in early winter 1949.

The Canadian Museum of Photography was launched in Toronto in June of 1987. Its first exhibition, entitled Incredible Journeys, was based on a selection of my early Inuit and Chipewyan photographs. Museum Director Lorraine Monk, formerly of the National Film Board and well-known for organizing exhibitions and editing books, undertook the vast chore of assembling and setting up the show.

I was moved by the interest shown in my 130 images by the 25,000 visitors to the show. Some studied them in great detail and were astounded by the way of life in the Canadian Arctic as it was just one generation ago. We also displayed some of my early Duck Lake pictures, on loan from the Hudson's Bay Company Library in Winnipeg. Several were blown up to mural size. One day I took my camera to the exhibition and made the pictures reproduced here.

As for myself, I was sort of glad when the fuss and excitement were over. Another trip to the Arctic was coming up, a summer trip, and an opportunity to raft with friends for two weeks down the Horton River, the most northerly river of the Canadian mainland.

Richard Harrington



Richard Harrington

Richard Harrington

Richard Harrington

Richard Harrington

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President Harding's Last Stand

Vancouver Gave Him A Hero's Welcome And Then He Sailed Away To Die

BY ROBERT C. BELYK

On a hot summer day in 1923 Warren G. Harding, President of the United States, disembarked from the troop carrier, U.S.S. *Henderson* onto Vancouver's Pier A. The band aboard the *Henderson* played "The Star Spangled Banner" as the President and Mrs. Harding made their way down the gangway. Once on Canadian soil, a twenty-one gun salute from the 16th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery shook the air. Along the dock, the president inspected a guard of honour while a Canadian military band picked up the strains of "The Star Spangled Banner". A formal welcome was presented by the representatives of the federal, provincial and civic governments. This was the beginning of a historic visit by the twenty-ninth president of the United States. But it was a visit soon followed by tragedy.

In the late spring of 1923 President Harding began a long tour by train through the western United States, followed by a sea voyage to Alaska. On the return journey from the territory, a brief goodwill stop in Vancouver was scheduled. The first part of his trip was physically taxing on the president. During his swing through the West, he made fourteen formal speeches in the larger cities. The president was a gregarious individual who enjoyed grass roots politicking. Although the president's first scheduled stop was not until St. Louis, he frequently halted the train along the way to make impromptu speeches from the rear platform of his specially built rail car. The presidential train crossed Missouri under an unrelenting sun. Harding's speeches from the rear platform left him badly sunburned and his lips became so swollen that he had to cancel several engagements in Kansas City. On 4 July the president and his party reached Tacoma, Washington where they boarded the *Henderson* for the journey to Alaska.

The Alaska trip was intended to give the president a first-hand look at the problems facing the territory. A bureaucratic nightmare needed to be sorted out — five government departments shared administrative responsibility for the territory — before a coherent resource development policy could be achieved. However, those close to Harding hoped the relatively relaxed Alaskan journey would be recuperative.

The president's health had deteriorated since his inauguration in 1921. Increasingly, he tired on exertion. In early 1923 the fifty-seven year old Harding was stricken with what his physician diagnosed as influenza. He never fully recovered. Harding began to have difficulty breathing while lying down and complained of attacks of indigestion, abdominal pain and an oppressive feeling in his chest.

Despite his warm reception from the residents of Alaska, Harding seemed in low spirits. The sea voyage did not provide the hoped-for improvement in his health and his physical discomfiture was not lessened by a rare Alaskan heat wave. During his visit, the president sweltered under temperatures reaching 96 degrees Fahrenheit.

On 22 July the *Henderson* headed south from Sitka on her return journey from Alaska. During the trip to Vancouver Harding suffered what his personal phy-

Vancouver City Archives

A weary President Harding rests at the tee, Shaughnessy Golf Club 1923.

sician, Dr. Sawyer, diagnosed as ptomaine poisoning, brought on by eating tainted crab meat. Although physically ill, Harding refused to cancel his visit to Vancouver.

The *Henderson* steamed into Vancouver Harbour on the morning of 26 July to be greeted by a salute from the six-inch guns of the H.M.S. *Curlew*. After receiving an official welcome at dock-side, the president drove by motorcade the two miles to Stanley Park. Thousands of city residents filled the sidewalks to catch a view of the president as he waved to the crowd from his open car. The streets along the parade route were decorated with hundreds of Canadian, British, and American flags. Lamp posts were draped in bunting. Banners stretched between the buildings proclaimed greetings from the citizens of Vancouver. In Stanley Park the president was welcomed by thunderous cheers as he walked from his car to the stage. An audience estimated at over 40,000 — one of the best crowds the president received on his entire tour — listened with the aid of a specially installed amplifying system to the president's formal speech. President Harding's Canadian reception seemed to take some American journalists by surprise. As one reporter wrote, "An American observer taking in the frequent outbursts of approval might easily have supposed that a popular candidate for public office in the United States was speaking to an audience of his most ardent supporters."

Harding's enthusiastic reception was in large part due to the fact that this was a history-making visit. Harding was the first American president, while in office, to set foot on Canadian soil and the city's residents turned out in their thousands to witness the event. As the Vancouver *Sun* declared, it was to Vancouver's honour that the American press reported, ". . . to their readers in every city of the United States

Vancouver City Archives

The presidential parade passes up Granville Street while thousands cheer.

that no place on the itinerary has given the president so vast and overwhelmingly cordial a reception as this Canadian city."

Also, Harding, through his efforts to bring the United States into the World Court, was regarded by many in Canada as a peacemaker. Canadians desired to hear the rhetoric of peace and Harding did not disappoint them. As thousands of Vancouver citizens crowded around the stage set on a grassy slope in the beautiful park, they listened as Harding proclaimed: "You are not only our neighbor, but a very good neighbor, and we rejoice in your advancement and admire your independence no less sincerely than we value your friendship." The Vancouver audience enthusiastically received the president's words.

Yet the energy of the crowd seemed to draw strength out of the president. Harding appeared increasingly frail under the strain of the occasion. For the duration of his speech he had to face the blistering summer sun. After the Stanley Park address, Harding was taken to a luncheon at the old Hotel Vancouver, presented by the Government of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. Again cheering crowds lined the street and pressed into the hotel lobby to catch a glimpse of the president. The luncheon was no small affair. Over 600 guests filled the hotel ballroom to listen to an address by Premier John Oliver.

After the lunch Harding was driven to a local club for a golf game. He managed to play out the first few holes, but soon became physically exhausted. After the sixth hole, the president's foursome moved over and played the eighteenth, so that those watching would not easily suspect they had not nearly completed their game. Before once more entering his car, Harding summoned sufficient energy to move through the throng of club members and shake hands. Consummate actor that he was, Harding seemed always able to put on a public face. But the Vancouver visit was taking its toll on the man. He returned to his hotel room to rest for an hour before participating in the evening ceremonies.

That evening, at a dinner given him by the Government of Canada, Harding delivered a fifteen-minute

Vancouver City Archives

The president is escorted through Stanley Park before his speech.

speech on the bonds of peace between Canada and the United States. "I am sure," the president declared, "we share the same fundamental convictions about world peace and the human obligation to promote and maintain it. We may differ as to the practicability or effectiveness of this or that programme, but we are in complete accord about the end to be attained." Although, as usual, the Canadians received it enthusiastically, Harding's speech was delivered without energy or drive. Following dinner, the president attended a public reception. He stood in the receiving line shaking hands for less than half an hour. The line was not nearly finished when the president excused himself and returned to the *Henderson*.

Shortly after 10 p.m. the *Henderson* backed away from her dock at Pier A and steamed slowly toward the harbour entrance. Hundreds of cars converged at Brockton and Prospect Points to take a last look at the *Henderson* and her two destroyer escorts as they passed Stanley Park on their way to Seattle. The navigation lights on the three ships were now partially obscured by a sea fog which had rolled into the harbour. The ship carrying the president soon disappeared into the gray night. President Warren G. Harding's first and last visit to Canada had come to an end. During his time in Vancouver, the president had managed to carry out the duties of office — the dinners, the speeches, even a golf game — but the strain was becoming too much. Harding had maintained a brave front during the long tour, but he was very seriously ill and spiritually deeply depressed. In his cabin on the *Henderson*, the president's night was far from peaceful.

About 3 a.m. the sound of grinding metal filled the fog shrouded night air. As the *Henderson's* crew made their way onto the deck it became clear that the president's ship had struck another vessel, the American destroyer *Zeilin*, amidships. There was apparently not much damage to the *Henderson* and no serious injuries among passengers and crews on either ship, but the *Zeilin* was in danger of sinking. Harding's valet rushed into the president's cabin to report that the *Henderson* had received minor damage, and that the captain had

Vancouver City Archives

President Harding and Vancouver Mayor Tisdale cool their heads in the summer heat.

ordered everyone on deck. Harding was lying on his bed with his face in his hands. "I hope the boat sinks," the president replied.

In Seattle President Harding gave an important speech on the future of Alaska. The president delivered it poorly, at one point confusing "Alaska" with "Nebraska". As in Vancouver, the heat in Seattle was intense and during the day Harding stood bareheaded in the blazing sun. By the end of the evening the president was near collapse. He was complaining of severe cramps and indigestion. Harding's physician continued to blame the president's illness on ptomaine poisoning, but Harding's condition seemed more serious to others in the presidential party. Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work, once a practicing physician, and Harding's medical aide Dr. Joel T. Boone examined the president and found that his heart was considerably enlarged. All tour stops scheduled between Seattle and San Francisco were cancelled.

The presidential train proceeded directly to San Francisco where Harding was moved to the Palace Hotel. On Sunday 29 July Harding's condition worsened. On Monday and Tuesday the president was given intravenous digitalis and caffeine. By Thursday, Harding seemed much better. His attending physicians cautiously announced, "While recovery will take some time, we are more confident than heretofore as to the outcome of his illness." The president sat up in bed and talked briefly about future fishing trips and said he regretted the fact he had caught no fish in Alaska. As the president's nurse prepared him for the night, Harding twitched sharply and his mouth fell open. Breathing ceased. The president was pronounced dead at 7:32 p.m. on 2 August 1923.

Coming as it did so soon after his visit, Vancouver residents were deeply shocked by the president's death. The Vancouver *Sun* lamented, "Today our two nations of kindred blood and tongue draw near in common sympathy. For that great and good man who passed stole into our hearts as few have done before." The Vancouver *Daily Province* wrote, "The activities of [Harding's] two years in office seemed but a prelude of a notable administration, in which the United States would attempt the solution of many domestic problems, and make a worthy contribution toward the peace and progress of the world." Nor was his visit forgotten. On 16 September 1925 the Harding International Peace Memorial was dedicated in Stanley Park almost on the spot where he had made his friendship speech two years earlier. Paid for by the Kiwanis International, the imposing semi-circular structure is thirty-seven feet in total length, and contains a commemoration to Harding's visit, with an excerpt from Harding's Stanley Park speech cut into two stone tablets.

Yet there is a paramount irony. Among many American historians, Harding is regarded as one of the greatest presidential failures. Today, his short term of office is often remembered more for scandal than accomplishment. Only after his death did the shadier side of the Harding administration become open knowledge.

Most damaging to Harding's reputation was the conviction in 1929 of his first Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, as a result of the famous Teapot Dome oil lease fraud. Fall eventually went to prison, but the Teapot Dome affair was not an isolated incident. Many other important political appointees, some personal friends of the president, either fell before the judge's gavel or died by their own hand rather than face the consequences of their impropriety.

Harding was not personally implicated in wrongdoing, but that alone could not absolve him of responsibility for political corruption on such a grand scale. At the time of his visit to Canada, the taint of scandal had not yet touched the president, but as Harding's stature has diminished, his words on peace and friendship have passed from memory.

Today, the visit of President Warren G. Harding to Canada is recalled by the large monument in Vancouver's Stanley Park, but to most Vancouver citizens its significance is obscure. Harding's words cut into the granite tablets seem out of context. They are the words of a man only dimly remembered. They do not tell the story of that day in 1923, when Vancouver accorded an American president one of his last great welcomes. In the city of his triumphant visit, Warren Gamaliel Harding is all but forgotten. ♦

Robert C. Belyk is a Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, freelance writer with a special interest in history.

Not By Seals Alone

THE MORAVIANS IN THE FUR TRADE — SOULS AND SKINS

By Barnett Richling

Canada's historic fur trade period witnessed both cooperation and conflict between European merchants and missionaries who entered the northern frontiers. Their differences stemmed from the separate ambitions that brought them among the Indian and Inuit peoples: for one, the making of profit, for the other, the winning of souls. Yet their aims were not incompatible. The trader's work was often assisted by the lessons of industry and frugality the missionaries taught to their native followers. In similar fashion, religious conversion was helped by the economic routines centered on the trading post. Though rarely embracing one another unconditionally, trader and missionary did meet in a relationship born of mutual necessity.

The separate purposes of mission and trade found different expression in northern Labrador. In 1771, United Brethren missionaries, members of a German church commonly known as Moravian, became the first Europeans to settle permanently among the Inuit who dwelled along the subarctic coastline north of Hamilton Inlet. True to their calling, the Brethren laboured to bring the teachings of Christ and the spirit of European civilization to the people. Their goal of converting the entire Inuit nation was not easily won, but in 1803-1804 the "Great Awakening", an episode of mass conversion, assured the mission's future in ministering to the well-being of virtually all the inhabitants of this northern territory.

Less well known about the Brethren was their role in regional economic life and trade. Like many missionaries of the time, the Moravians participated in economic activities as a way to improve the spiritual and material conditions of their followers, and to defray the costs of maintaining their mission. What set them apart from other missionaries was the extent of their business interests.

In 1769, Great Britain consented to the establishment of a Moravian mission in Labrador. The Crown granted the Brethren three parcels of land, each of 100,000 acres, on which they built the first of their settlements: Nain in 1771, Okak in 1776, and Hopedale in 1782. In time, five more stations were built along a 500 mile span of coastline north of Hamilton Inlet. From these bases the Brethren ministered to the people's needs, and operated a diversified business enterprise concentrating on trade in whalebone, seal skins, oils and fur, and providing seasonal employment for Inuit men, women and children.

The day to day affairs of the Labrador mission were managed by the Moravians' Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel in London. In 1769, the Society formed a ship's company to carry on a barter trade with the Inuit. Some of the profits of this trade were intended to finance mission activities. During its first quarter century of operation, the ship's company and mission amassed considerable debts. At the same time, the profitability of trade suffered due to a decline in baleen whales, formerly the mainstay of the ship's company's exports, and to competition from merchants in south Labrador. To prevent the collapse of the entire venture, the Society reorganized the mission in 1795 by merging its commercial and missionary branches. Missionary "store brothers" were appointed to manage the business at each station, and local trading stores were housed in the same buildings the Brethren used for church and living quarters. The organization of mission and trade remained virtually unchanged until the present century.

The character of the Moravian economy in nineteenth century Labrador is made evident in the pages of a document the Society issued to the Brethren in 1852. Written in German, this document, *Handels Tabelle* (Trade Schedule), contains instructions and regulations for the "store brothers" in charge of the business at each station. It also provides details of everyday economic life at the missions, the kinds of work people did, the wages they received, and the goods they produced.

Seals were the mainstay of Moravian trade, just as they were the staple of Inuit subsistence. Each year the Brethren sent cargoes to Europe that contained bales of seal skins and barrels of seal oil rendered at the stations. The seal was to the Moravians what the beaver was to the Hudson's Bay Company. In fact,

Niels Jannasch

The choir at Nain, 1880s.

just as the Company adopted the "made beaver" as a standard for trade transactions, so, too, did the Brethren adopt its equivalent, the *speck* (German for fat) or *syrik*, a measure of seal blubber. They used it as a means for calculating monetary and in-kind values of the goods and commodities traded at their stores.

During the first sixty years of the nineteenth century the mission valued the *syrik* at one British shilling. In keeping with the custom of merchants elsewhere in Labrador at the time, however, the actual buying power of the *syrik* was one half the value of the shilling, six pence. This was because the costs of most imported goods were twice what they were in England due to the expenses of transportation. For example, a labourer might be paid one shilling for a day's work, or else be given six pence worth of goods at the store. If he were to buy goods with cash, one shilling would purchase the same six pence worth of merchandise. The standard weight of seal fat comprising one *syrik* was fourteen pounds. In practice, the unit always had the same monetary value, but its weight might be greater (i.e. fifteen or more pounds) in areas where there was little or no competition. The *syrik* was thus a kind of Labrador currency, equated with the shilling but revalued in line with the overhead costs of doing business in a distant land.

The Brethren valued everything they bought and sold in terms of the *syrik*. In the early 1850s, for instance, they paid trappers two to five *syrik* for furs such as red fox, marten and mink, and as much as eighty *syrik* for the pelt of a prime silver fox. Caribou skins averaged about two *syrik*, seal skins a bit less. A length of rope made from a whole walrus hide fetched between 14 and 16 *syrik*. In addition to skins and furs, mission exports included feathers, seal and walrus oils, basketwork and crafts, and seal skin boots. Other items were produced for local consumption: clothing, a variety of country foods, firewood and lumber. The Moravians did not operate commercial fisheries until the eary 1860s, but previous to that they purchased wet and dry cod fish for redistribution to needy families. Sixty cod were valued at one *syrik*.

Apart from running trade and retail stores, the mission employed Inuit in a variety of occupations and paid them in kind and currency. Seasonal employment at seal netting stations was an especially important source of income. Netting crews worked on a share basis, receiving one fourth of the catch and free use

of nets and other gear owned by the mission in return for their labour. They were also permitted to consume unlimited meat and fat while at the hunt. The Brethren preferred that workers take their share in merchandise from the store. If a man had unpaid store debts and was not entitled to his share, he still received a small allocation of seal skins: three or four if he were a bachelor, six for a married man. The store brother oversaw distribution of the shares, insuring that each crew member received both large and small skins.

Since netting stations were located on outlying islands, the store brothers relied on dog sled traffic to and from the villages to obtain their seals. Sled drivers received a gratuity of one chew of tobacco or one small loaf of bread for each delivery. They were not actually paid for hauling seals unless the store brother hired them to make special trips. For teams consisting of at least ten dogs, the usual pay included six pence per day and allowance for dog feed.

Wages for other types of work varied according to the age, sex and marital status of the workers, and by the type of job. General labourers loaded and unloaded the annual cargo ship, cut firewood, cleared snow, worked in the mission gardens and so forth. The workday was from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. An adult male's daily wage included one chew of tobacco, two breads, two fish and two pence currency. The pay was one chew of tobacco and one bread for mending seal nets, a chew and one fish for hanging nets or moving them into storage. Women received three fish, two breads and one and a half pence per day for most jobs, two fish for working with seal nets. Boys under age seventeen earned the same pay as adult women; younger boys and girls received only two fish and one and a half pence per day, or a single fish for helping with seal nets. The Society recommended that children attending mission schools not be employed while classes were in session.

During the summer men were hired for construction jobs at a rate of four *syrik* per week, but only if they "are industrious and do good work." Their hours, however, were from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Women found summer jobs in the blubber yard, pounding seal fat and rendering it into oil for export. These *"syrik* women" also worked nearly twelve hours per day, receiving a daily ration of two fish and from two and a half to three *syrik* per week. Apart from their wages, all summer employees received a penny's worth of flour

The Moravian mission, Makkovik, circa 1901.

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The settlement at Nain, Labrador.

(Left) Handling of salt cod, Nain wharf 1880s. (Right) Inuit with seal, Hopedale or Nain in the 1880s.

Niels Jannasch

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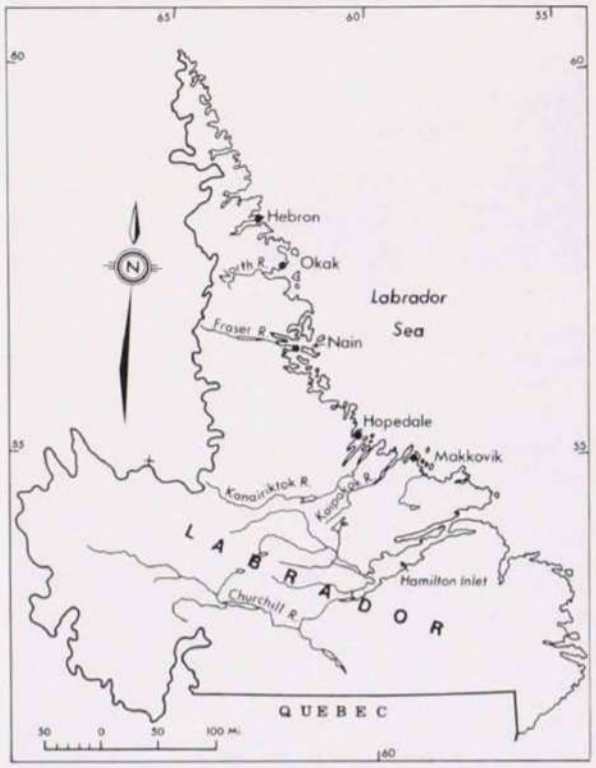
(Left) Inuit and Kayaks, Labrador, 1880s. (Right) Planting time in the mission garden, Nain, 1880s.

Turnip harvest in the snow, Hebron circa 1885.

Niels Jannasch



every Sunday. When illness or bad weather prevented people from working, the mission provided each employee with two or three fish or two breads per day, but gave no money. Medicines were also dispensed free of charge to employees.

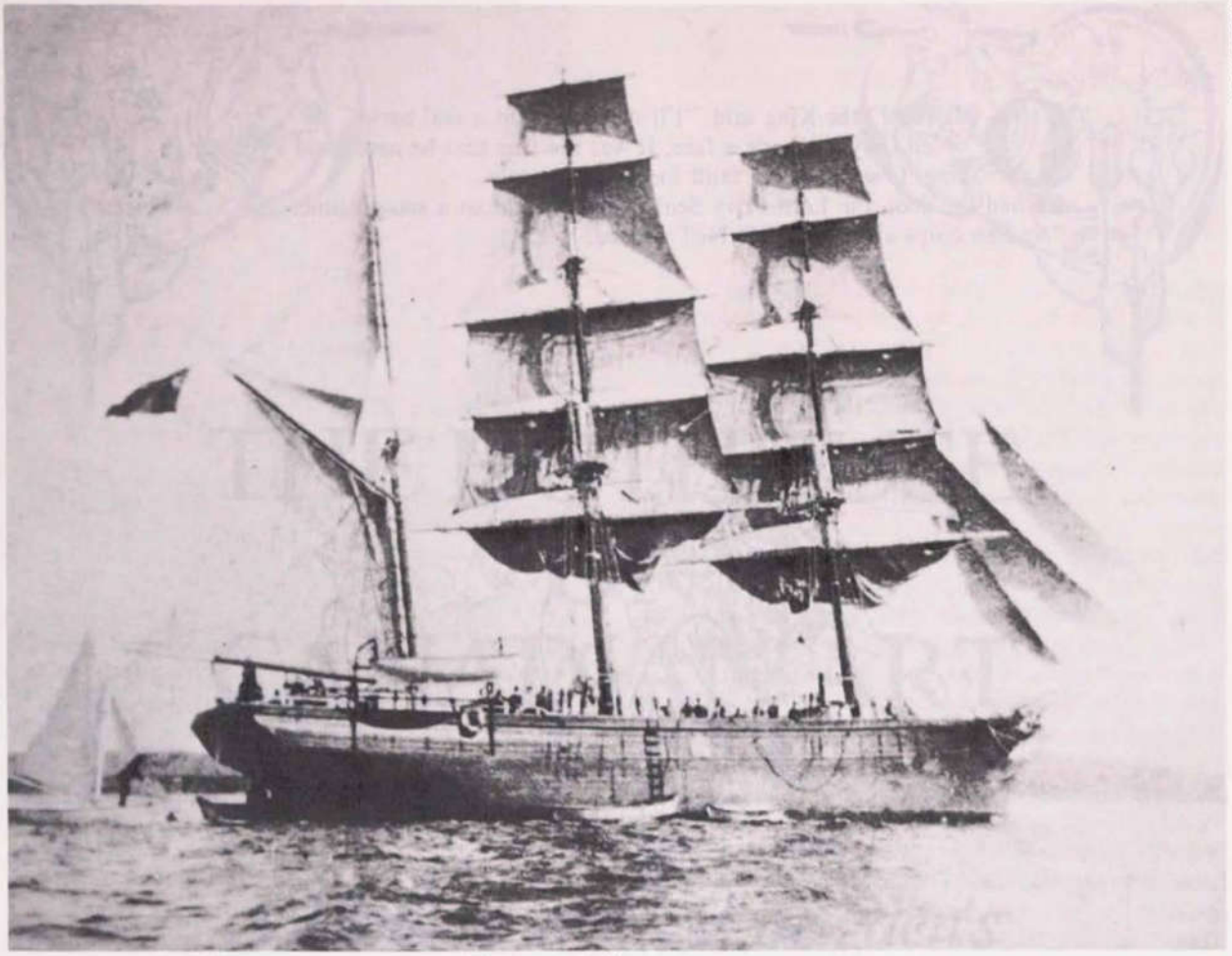
Substitutions were permitted: one chew of tobacco could be exchanged for one loaf of bread, for example, as long as the bread weighed no more than a quarter of a pound. One bread could be traded for three cod fish. In addition, beer was given to people doing certain kinds of work: digging in the gardens, collecting grass for baskets, pounding blubber, launching or pulling ashore the mission boat *Union*. The practice of distributing beer was actually frowned upon by the Society: the missionaries were advised that "It would be good if the issue of beer would be limited, and that it would not be started where hitherto it has not been issued."

Piece work was another form of employment. A person could earn four *syrik* for knitting a seal net of approximately ninety pounds, one *syrik* for a trout net made from finished twine. A skin boat *(kayak)* made from at least six skins but whose wooden frame was built from material supplied by the mission was worth twenty *syrik;* if fewer than six skins were used, the value was sixteen *syrik*. Tobacco was never supplied to people engaged in any of these occupations. Daily rations of food were given in addition to piece work rates to those employed in lumber production. A man got one *syrik* for making fifty shingles, doing tongue and groove work on ten boards, or shaping twenty fence posts, each five feet long. Plucking one hundred partridges (ptarmigan) was also worth one *syrik*.

The distances separating each of the settlements hampered communications between the missionaries. Moreover, travellers often encountered dangerous conditions in the form of storms, rough seas and other natural hazards. As a result, the Brethren paid premium wages for messengers, local people who used their own boats or sleds to deliver letters and parcels along the coast as the need arose. Boat crews received between 40 and 44 *syrik* per trip, one keg each of flour, peas, and bread, a pound of tobacco, a piece of salt beef, and sufficient store credit for other basic provisions. On top of this, the owner of the boat received eight *syrik* as a rental for his craft. Trips between Okak and Hebron were valued at 32 to 36 *syrik*, but the same outlay of supplies and credit was given. In winter, sled trips to other settlements were worth eight *syrik* to the driver, one-quarter *syrik* for each dog in his team and sufficient dog feed for the journey out and back. When two men travelled together they received about 20 breads, a small keg of flour, one *syrik* worth of tobacco and store credit for basic provisions.

In addition to these wages, messengers also received separate compensation for the items they carried. A small box or sea chest, for example, was valued at an extra *syrik*, a letter box at half a *syrik*. Where letter pouches alone were carried, men got only beer and bread. Messengers sent by the Brethren to another village were also entitled to one meal per day at their destination, usually at the mission house. They could not request items from the store for their own use, but could obtain dog feed. When a messenger was forced to delay at least three days, he was allowed a ration of one *syrik* worth of tobacco and a "mess of peas".

As important as communications between the different mission stations were, the annual arrival of the mission ship *Harmony* from England was of even greater importance. The ship reached the coast sometime in mid to late summer, breaking a ten month period of isolation for the entire population. The *Har-*



Niels Jannasch

The three-masted barque Harmony.

mony brought supplies and merchandise for the stores, personal and official correspondence, and new missionaries. On its return it carried the year's export cargoes and homeward mail. Understandably, great apprehension accompanied the wait for the ship's appearance. There was cause for celebration when the *Harmony* was spotted nearing a settlement.

The ship's crew received special attention during their stay on the coast. At Nain, each sailor, including the ship's cook, received a leather jacket worth five *syrik*; at Okak each got a pair of skin boots and a pair of pants, valued together at about six *syrik*. At Hebron sailors received a second pair of boots. Naturally the ship's captain and mates were accorded even better treatment. At every port they were given a pair of boots, and at Hopedale and Nain one dozen leather tobacco pouches and a pound of tobacco, if desired. The cook was entitled to similar gifts, but only "if passengers do not have any well-substantiated complaint."

The character of the Moravian economy remained essentially unchanged throughout the 1800s. Toward the close of the last century, though, the Brethren encountered growing competition from free traders and Newfoundland schoonermen, and from the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1926, the weight of commercial rivalry forced the Society to relinquish its trade to the "Bay". But while they gave up their business interests, the Brethren stayed in Labrador to continue the spiritual and educational work begun over 150 years before. That work remains a part of life in the villages of northern Labrador today. By contrast, the legacy of mission trade has long faded from memory. ♦

Barnett Richling is in the Department of Sociology, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax. *He is grateful for the assistance of Niels Jannasch in translating the archival document upon which this article is based.*

"Odds Fish!" the King said. "I'll swear I heard a seal bark!"

Nell Gwynne made a face. It was not true that he never said a foolish thing. It was his own fault for rising so early.

Beyond the door, the Lord Privy Seal cleared his throat a second time.

"And no quips about privies!" Nell warned.

"This morning," the King said, yawning, "we are to seal the charter for the Hudson's Bay adventurers. Cousin Rupert will be waiting."

He swept the dogs off the bed with a regal gesture and began pulling on his silk stockings.

"Another day in the life of Charles the Second," he said.

"Charles the Third," Nell corrected him. Her first king, he was her third Charles.

It was May the second, 1670.

The long life of the Hudson's Bay Company was about to begin.

The Great Fur Opera **— the hilarious spoof of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company written by Kildare Dobbs with illustrations by Ronald Searle — has become a Canadian comedy classic since it was published in 1970, the Honourable Company's 300th anniversary year.** ***The Beaver*** **is now offering a limited number of a special presentation edition at the low price of $19.98 (postage paid) while supplies last. For your copy of** ***The Great Fur Opera*** **send your cheque or money order to** ***The Beaver,*** **450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0E7.**

THE HOTHOUSE OF CANADIAN ART

A 'Golden Age' At Brigden's

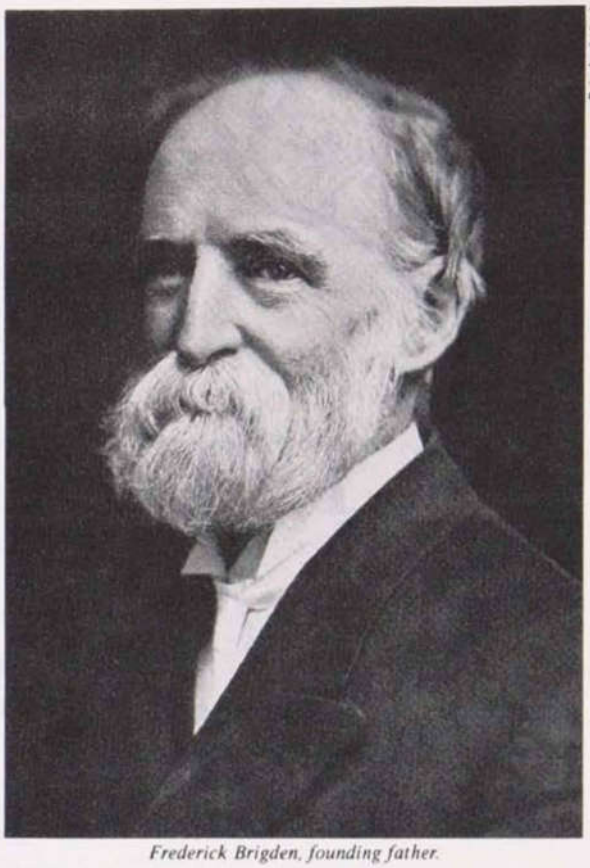
By ANGELA E. DAVIS

The association of art with commerce in the modern sense began in the nineteenth century in England as the result of the industrialization of the craft of printing. This permitted mechanized reproduction of visual images, and led to the introduction of illustrations into publications previously devoted solely to the printed word. Prior to this, artists who wished to have their work reproduced approached the undertaking in one of two ways. They either, like Turner, etched or engraved their work themselves, or employed other artists, whose specialty was etching or engraving, to do it for them. Whichever choice they made, the whole process was manual, from the copying of the original onto the etching plate or the woodblock, to the operation of the printing press. In the 1780s, however, the engraver Thomas Bewick developed a form of fine white-line engraving which was extremely suitable for repetitive reproduction and in 1814 the German inventor, Freidrich Konig, introduced the first steam driven printing press into the printing workshop of the *Times* newspaper in London.

This combination of factors completely changed the concept of the reproduction of visual images. It led, by the mid-nineteenth century, to what became known as commercial, or "mechanical" wood-engraving and to the employment of hundreds of engravers, illustrators and artists in engraving houses or graphic arts studios. The work produced by these so-called "commercial" engravers fuelled the rise of the popular press which, in turn, increased pressure on the engravers for more work. Not only did the engravers reproduce the water colour or black and white sketches of artist-reporters covering events at home or abroad, but they also provided portraits, local landscapes, reproductions of famous works of art and, of course, advertisements. Such journals as the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic* owed their success to the work of these generally anonymous engravers and illustrators.

The problem with increased productivity, necessitated by public acceptance of an illustrated press, was that speed became a major consideration. Engravers who were, after a lengthy apprenticeship, as skilled in drawing and painting as they were in engraving, found themselves working virtually in an assembly-line situation. They were frequently responsible for engraving only a small part of a much larger illustration and were, as a result, quite detached from the finished product. They were ill paid, over-worked and under-appreciated. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of them chose to emigrate. Among those who made this decision was Frederick Brigden, an artist-craftsman who would found a major commercial engraving house in Canada and would, as a result, be of considerable importance in the development of Canadian art.

Brigden had undertaken his apprenticeship at the most important engraving studio in England, that of



Brigden's Ltd.

Frederick Brigden, founding father.

W.J. Linton, had studied drawing under John Ruskin at the London Working Men's College and had worked as an engraver and illustrator for the *Illustrated London News*. But in 1872, with a young family to support and with, as he felt, no prospects for advancement in his chosen profession, he left England for Toronto. After much initial hardship, he was able, in 1876, in partnership with two other immigrant engravers, to found the Toronto Engraving Company and thus begin his long association with Canadian art and Canadian business.

Canadian art developed parallel to the process of the mechanization of printing and the reproduction of visual images. With a few notable exceptions, the first artists to paint the Canadian scene had been travellers or recorders, people who were passing through, but by the mid-nineteenth century there were many who had taken up residence in the cities of eastern Canada. And for these artists, some of whom would later be included among the founding members of the National Gallery and the Royal Canadian Academy, association with the world of commercial reproduction was accepted as a matter of course. In the 1860s and the 1870s they worked for commercial photography studios and from the mid-1880s, for commercial engraving firms. Homer Watson, George Reid and Lucius O'Brien

Metropolitan Toronto Library

An example of early wood engraving, Lord Dufferin drawn and engraved by the Toronto Engraving Company for the Globe, circa 1880.

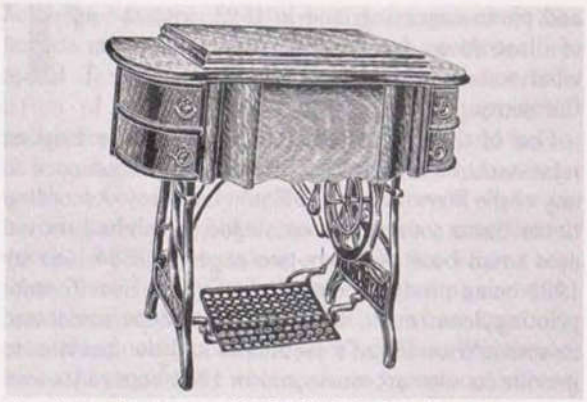
are among those who painted backgrounds, tinted portraits and coloured photographs for the firm of Notman's in Montreal and Toronto in the nineteenth century, while later, in the early years of the present century, J.E.H. MacDonald, Tom Thomson and other future members of the Group of Seven, worked for the Toronto engraving firm of Grip.

In 1876, however, the fledgling Toronto Engraving Company relied on the skills of its founders to conduct both the artistic and commercial aspects of its business. These skills were, fortunately, considerable; with the result that by the 1880s, and in spite of the fact that it was one firm among many competing for the custom of newspaper and magazine publishers, the Toronto Engraving Company was well established, with a clientele which included the publishers of the *Globe*, the *Farmer's Advocate* and the *Telegram*. By the end of the decade Frederick Bridgen was sole owner of the business and it had grown to a size where, as well as employing his sons George and Fred H. Brigden as business manager and art director respectively, he was required to employ a number of other artists and engravers. In the early 1890s he further extended his resources to include the new processes of photography and photo-engraving, and in 1893, with the provision of illustrations for the mail order catalogue, started what was to be a long association with the T. Eaton Company.

One of the more interesting aspects of the Brigden relationship with Eaton's is that it is not mentioned in any of the literature on the Eaton company. According to the Eaton sources, the catalogue, which had started as a small book of thirty-two pages in 1884, was by 1901 being produced entirely in Eaton's own Toronto printing department, with its own art department and its own artists. Eaton's eventually had the facilities to provide its own art work, and in 1901 started its own printing department, but prior to this it used the printing presses of the Methodist Book House and the illustrative services of the Toronto Engraving Company.

In a letter written to a grandson of Timothy Eaton many years later, Fred H. Brigden has described the first work done for Eaton's: "In the early 1890s our firm was called on to do some of the first illustrations for the catalogue. These were engraved on boxwood, the method mostly used at that time." He went on to explain that "photo-engraving was rapidly being developed . . . the first fashion illustrations . . . were drawn in pen and ink and reproduced by line engraving . . . [and] the early catalogues . . . were rapidly improved as the half-tone process began shortly after to be used." Mr. Eaton, he said, "encouraged us to develop a specialized art department for mail order illustration." It is obvious that the commitment on the part of the Brigden firm to the established Eaton retail business was considerable. Contracts were, of course, carried out for other firms, but Eaton's seems to have been the major client and the one which had the most influence on Brigden decision-making. Certainly, the production of the twice yearly catalogue eventually became the focal point around which all other work was adjusted.

Not only was the Toronto Engraving Company involved with the provision of illustrations for the early catalogues, but it was also involved in the failure of the printers' strike against Eaton's in 1901. In that year, Eaton's started to operate its own printing department. It purported to abide by union rules but, in fact, was not a union shop. The Toronto Typographical Union called a strike which, in spite of a highly successful boycott of the retail store, was settled once it became apparent that Eaton's could produce its mail order catalogue without the skills of union workers. Eaton's was able to do this because it purchased an electro-typing plant, appointed a clothing department manager, one Lowry, to train his salesman in its use, and then arranged with the Brigden firm to make two sets of illustrations in case of failure in their printing. The production of the catalogue would not have been



A sewing machine, engraved by Brigden's for Eaton's western catalogue.

possible, of course, if the Brigden photo-engravers had been unionized, something which did not take place for another three years.

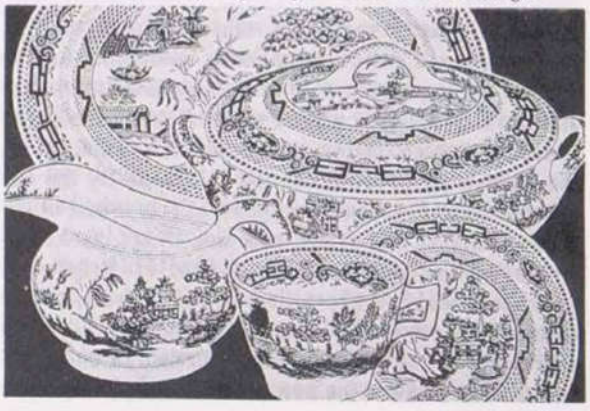
In 1904, following a short strike, the Toronto Engraving Company was the first graphic arts firm in Canada to accept the International Photo-engravers Union, a fact which Frederick Brigden described as unavoidable due to the size of his firm. When he had started to provide illustrations for Eaton's in 1893, he had "from fifteen to seventeen artists and engravers" working for him, mostly on the production of wood-engravings, but photographers and photo-engravers were already part of the workforce. The staff was further extended with the introduction of colour into the reproduction process and, as Eaton's placed greater emphasis on coloured illustration of clothing in the catalogue, so there was a new requirement for artists trained in the area of "fashion design". The amount of work was such that in 1912 the Toronto Engraving Company moved to premises capable of accommodating all aspects of its business, including printing. In the same year the firm changed its name to Brigden's Limited, remaining under that title until it merged with Rous and Mann in 1979.

By 1913, the year in which Eaton's decided to produce a western mail order catalogue, Brigden's was a leading graphic arts house in eastern Canada. It had a large workforce, with unionized photo-engravers and an art department consisting, at catalogue time, of up to seventy or eighty artists. The latter were, however, like the "commercial" engravers earlier, obliged to work under difficult circumstances. They were subject, in spite of the fact that many of them were highly skilled, to specialization or a division of labour when working on the catalogues: some drew only boots and shoes, some specialized in jewellery, silverware or furniture, while others devoted their skills to page decoration. A further specialist was responsible for the overall layout of the advertising material on the page, and even the fashion artists, who were described as the "aristocrats of the mail order catalogue", and were highly trained individuals, were forced to specialize. Some of them were required to paint only faces or hands and feet, while other sketched in the garment over the figure, washed in the light and shade or drew the final details of stitching and ornamentation on the garment being advertised.

It might be thought, in view of the assembly-line aspect of the work, that artistic creativity would be ruined in such a climate, but, in fact, many important Canadian artists worked for Brigden's and other similar firms. And many of them have since credited their years spent working for the graphic arts houses as having provided them with a discipline and technical skill which they might otherwise have lacked. This was especially the case for Winnipeg artists who, following the opening of Brigden's Winnipeg branch in 1914, found employment as well as creative encouragement.

According to the Brigden records, the decision to open a branch in Winnipeg was the result of a direct request on the part of Eaton's. Finding the running of the western mail order business from Winnipeg with a catalogue produced in Toronto too complicated, Eaton's put the Winnipeg shipping manager, Charles Band, in charge of organizing a western produced catalogue. He, in turn, contacted the Brigden firm which, by this time, was being run by George and Fred H. Brigden. Fred Brigden had some doubts about the venture, but his father, who was still alive, encouraged the move west. His theory was that "if a major customer offered you an opportunity you should grasp it no matter what the difficulties." In Fred Brigden's words, his father "handed out a substantial sum to enable us to purchase an engraving plant and open a studio in Winnipeg," and, as he noted, "so began an enterprise which had some part in the remarkable development of mail order business in western Canada." He should have added that it was also an enterprise

China, engraved by Brigden's for Eaton's western catalogue.



University of Winnipeg Collection

The view from Brigden's. Watercolour by Cyril Ashmore.

which played no small part in the remarkable development of art in western Canada. Fred Brigden organized the establishment of the firm in the top three floors of the *Farmer's Advocate* building, persuaded his cousin, Arnold, to take over as manager and opened for business in 1914. Eaton's were, therefore, responsible for bringing to the west a firm which would, in J. Russell Harper's words, parallel "the roles of Notman in Montreal and Toronto during the Victorian years and of Grip in Toronto early in the present century."

In spite of the general historical assessment that no art was produced in Winnipeg prior to 1914, and that it was not until the founding of the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1912 and the School of Art in 1913 that art began to be taken seriously by the community, there were many artists already in Winnipeg at the time of arrival of the Brigden firm and the production of the western catalogue. They were, of course, working commercially: as teachers, as cartoonists for the newspapers or as artists and engravers for those engraving companies already established. Among them Victor Long, who had arrived in 1887, was working for the firm of Buckbee Meers; Frank Armington had opened a teaching studio in 1900; Hay Stead was drawing cartoons for the *Manitoba Free Press*, and E.J. Ransom, an engraver of considerable talent, had founded his own company early in the century. Moreover, prior to the founding of the formal art institutions, a Manitoba Society of Artists had been formed in 1903, art exhibitions had been held at industrial and agricultural fairs or in private homes, and a number of large and important graphic arts firms were present in the city. Besides Buckbee Meers and Ransom's, there were such firms as Campbell's, Commercial Engravers, Stovel's and Bulman's. Of these, Stovel's and Bulman's were the largest and longest established and could, presumably, have taken on the Eaton's contract or, at least, offered Brigden's considerable competition.

Stovel's, founded in 1889 by the printer John Stovel, had, as early as 1905, mechanized and enlarged to an extent where the firm included engraving and lithography as well as printing. Similarly, Bulman's, which was established in 1892 by John Bulman, a lithographer, as a photo-engraving and lithography company, was also a thriving concern. In 1916, following a fire, Bulman's re-organized itself as a lithography and printing firm, but in 1914 both firms were providing all the services required for the reproduction of art work. And working in all the various graphic arts firms

were photo-engravers, wood-engravers, lithographers, stereotypers, electrotypers, bookbinders, printing pressmen and many, as it says in the Stovel record, "black and white and full colour artists". There were, in fact, so many firms active in the printing and engraving field that one could assume that an extra company was unnecessary or was bound to fail. But Stovel's, who had been approached by Eaton's in the first place, had declined the work, thus leaving the Eaton's catalogue contract to Brigden's. The Brigden firm was, of course, in a position to benefit from Stovel's decision. It was already practiced in catalogue production, and had the added advantage of experience with organized labour. Its acceptance of the International Photo-engravers Union has been credited with being one of the reasons for the firm's stability and success, while the employment of Arnold O. Brigden as manager can only, in retrospect, be described as inspired. It was Arnold Brigden who proceeded to hire highly trained art directors, to employ gifted apprentices who would later be among some of Canada's most respected artists, and to become personally involved in all aspects of Winnipeg's artistic community.

Arnold Brigden was the nephew of Frederick Brigden. He had been trained as a wood engraver and a photo-engraver but, by 1912, was working on the managerial side of a large New York graphic arts firm. He was, therefore, well qualified to take over the running of the Winnipeg business. There were the usual teething problems, of course. He complained at first that the other firms were producing better art work, and worried that at catalogue time the photo-engraving department would not be sufficiently well organized to cope. Also, in the first year, there was concern expressed about the effect of war on the local economic situation. By 1915, however, all major problems appear to have been solved and the firm had become a fixture.

Not least among the factors which allowed Brigden's to prosper under Arnold Brigden's guidance was

Members of Brigden's Winnipeg artistic staff, 1940s.

the succession of talented and experienced art directors. Tom MacLean, for example, who had worked at Grip in Toronto with MacDonald and other future Group of Seven members since 1896, left Toronto in 1914 to become the first head of Winnipeg Brigden's art department. He was followed by such men as Jack Schaflein, an American artist who was in charge of the commercial art department in the 1920s and 1930s, and Percy Edgar who left Toronto Brigden's in 1915 and became head of the fashion art department in Winnipeg in 1920. These men were all accomplished artists, remembered by their subordinates as their first art teachers and the major influences on their own careers.

Apprentices entered Brigden's employment in the early years without any previous training. Their talent may have been recognized by a school teacher or a parent, but, generally speaking, they were trained by the art director on the job. They entered one of two specialities: commercial art or fashion art. The former included the making of illustrations for machinery, appliances, furniture and other hard goods advertising, while the latter centred on art work for clothing, linen and soft goods. Photo-engravers, wood-engravers and photographers worked on the top floor of the building, fashion artists on the middle, commercial artists on the lower, and the whole firm was advertised as being equipped to "supply illustrations and designs for books, catalogues, magazines and general advertising of all kinds".

Customers were advertising agencies or, more commonly in the beginning, retail and wholesale firms. These included Hudson's Bay House, the Army and Navy Store in Regina, the Great West Garment Company in Edmonton, and Gaults, Birks and the Christie Company in Winnipeg. But it was the Eaton's mail order catalogue which provided the largest amount of work for the Brigden engravers and artists. In fact, the whole organization of the firm, in Winnipeg as in Toronto, centred on the production of the two annual catalogues: from February to May and from September to December specialists were brought in from the United States, extra staff was hired for the "busy" season, and low pay was supplemented by overtime.

Among the reasons given for John Stovel's refusal of the Eaton's contract was his inability to pay artists the high salary of $75 per week they were thought to earn. This figure was obviously exaggerated, although the American artists are recorded as having earned "good money". The average starting wage for a Brigden artist was closer to $9 per week for an eight hour day, with overtime payments of twenty-five cents an hour extra. However, at catalogue time, employees worked as one has said, "from morning until night, each day much like the other," with the result that they considered the two periods of catalogue production as their major source of income. The photo-engravers earned union wages and, according to oral sources, had their own pension scheme, but the wood-engravers and artists, whether apprentices or fully trained professionals, relied, for the major portion of their income, on the vagaries of the catalogue seasons. Ex-employees all talk of the low pay, the poor lighting and the lack of paid holidays, pension schemes or sick leave pay. The artists were somewhat envious of the photo-engravers' security, but at the same time did not consider unionizing themselves. They seem to have been grateful for any type of work connected with art and refer instead to the camaraderie they experienced: "It was fun at Brigden's," one of them recalled, "in spite of the heavy work schedule."

Charles Comfort, boy artist, at Brigden's, 1916.

The staff was large: from a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five employees have been mentioned. It included up to sixty-five artists, twenty-five engravers and five photo-engravers as well as office and sales personnel. In the early years there were as many as seventeen wood-engraving apprentices, but as photo-engraving and photography took over, so the numbers declined. Some were always needed for the commercial side of the catalogue, but others transferred to marketing or to photo-engraving. Whichever area they worked in, however, ex-employees talk of the number of "characters" who worked for Brigden's; people like Harold Foster who illustrated the first *Tarzan* books and created the comic book character, *Prince Valiant;* Emile

Harold Foster, the creator of Prince Valiant, got his early experience at Brigden's in Winnipeg.

Laliberté and Jim Petrie who painted covers for Harlequin Books; Charles Thorsen who was believed to be the creator of Bugs Bunny and Angus Shortt who went on to become a noted painter of Canadian wildlife.

There were also highly talented artists whose reputations have not been given their due: individuals appreciated locally but not nationally such as Cyril Ashmore and Alison Newton, who came from England; Newton Brett, who had trained in New York and Chicago before joining the firm in 1914; and Pauline and Christiane LeGoff who worked for Brigden's from 1918 to 1940. The former, under her married name of Boutal, became famous for her theatrical sets and costumes and her own paintings, while the latter has been described by all who knew her as "the best fashion artist in Canada". At times, however, the artists who worked for Brigden's resembled a "Who's Who" of Canadian art. Charles Comfort and Eric Bergman were with the firm from the start, while Victor Friesen, Nicholas Grandmaison, Caven Atkins, Fritz Brandtner, Philip Surrey, William Maltman, Gordon Smith and William Winter were among those working there for various periods during the 1920s and 1930s. The work they did for the catalogue never changed, but as William Winter has said, "all of us, talented or not, had to go into commercial art, there was no chance of earning a living at anything else."

By the time of the economic crisis of the 1930s, Arnold Brigden was accepted as a noteworthy, if somewhat eccentric, personality in Winnipeg. His business opinions were quoted in the *Free Press*, he was a member of the Art Committee of the Industrial Bureau which supported the Art Gallery and the Art School, and his camping trips and "alpine" hobbies, which included an Alpine Club hut in his backyard, were well known. He may not have been a member of the local "elite", but among artists, art teachers and collectors he was an important figure. Not only did he purchase the private work of many of his employees, at a time when few Canadians supported their own artists, but he also assisted them, during the depression, to take classes at the Winnipeg School of Art. Many of the artists had attended the school in the evenings or during the slack periods between the twice yearly catalogue rush, but in the 1930s the situation was somewhat different. Although the firm survived the depression years, ex-employees describe the period as one where they would be arbitrarily "laid-off," have their fees paid to attend the school and then be rehired as the situation improved: as one artist has said, "it was a sort of retainer".

In spite of the fact that Brigden artists were obviously working under difficult conditions, were poorly paid and were still obliged to fulfill the monotonous assembly-line production of the catalogue, they nevertheless recall their years with the firm as rewarding. They were at least semi-employed and were able to work in an atmosphere which was congenial to their special interests. Winter says, "it was stimulating to acquire the skills, the materials of painting, the brushes, the colours, and the enthusiasm of others." He has described what he calls "a tradition of water colour painting at the commercial houses," when he and Philip Surrey and other young artists would spend their lunch breaks sketching and painting in the cold Winnipeg winters, "mixing glycerine with our paints to keep them from freezing." Caven Atkins has also mentioned the stimulation of contact with other artists while at Winnipeg Brigden's: he has recorded, for example, how Fritz Brandtner introduced him to the ideas of the German Expressionists and the Bauhaus movement. And Brandtner himself, already an accomplished artist when he came to Winnipeg from Danzig in 1926, was able, because of the livelihood provided by his work with Brigden's, to experiment with his version of "Canadian modernism" in his spare hours. For these artists, then, Brigden's was a place where they were able to work and exchange ideas, and could, at the same time, hone their skills in the hope of a different future. But for some, like Eric Bergman and Charles Comfort, it was the major impetus in their careers. They owed their start to Fred and Arnold Brigden.

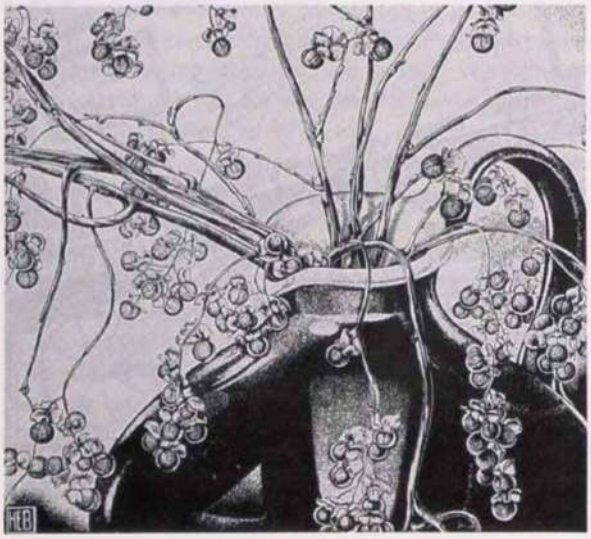
Eric Bergman was to become an internationally known graphic artist who remained with Brigden's all

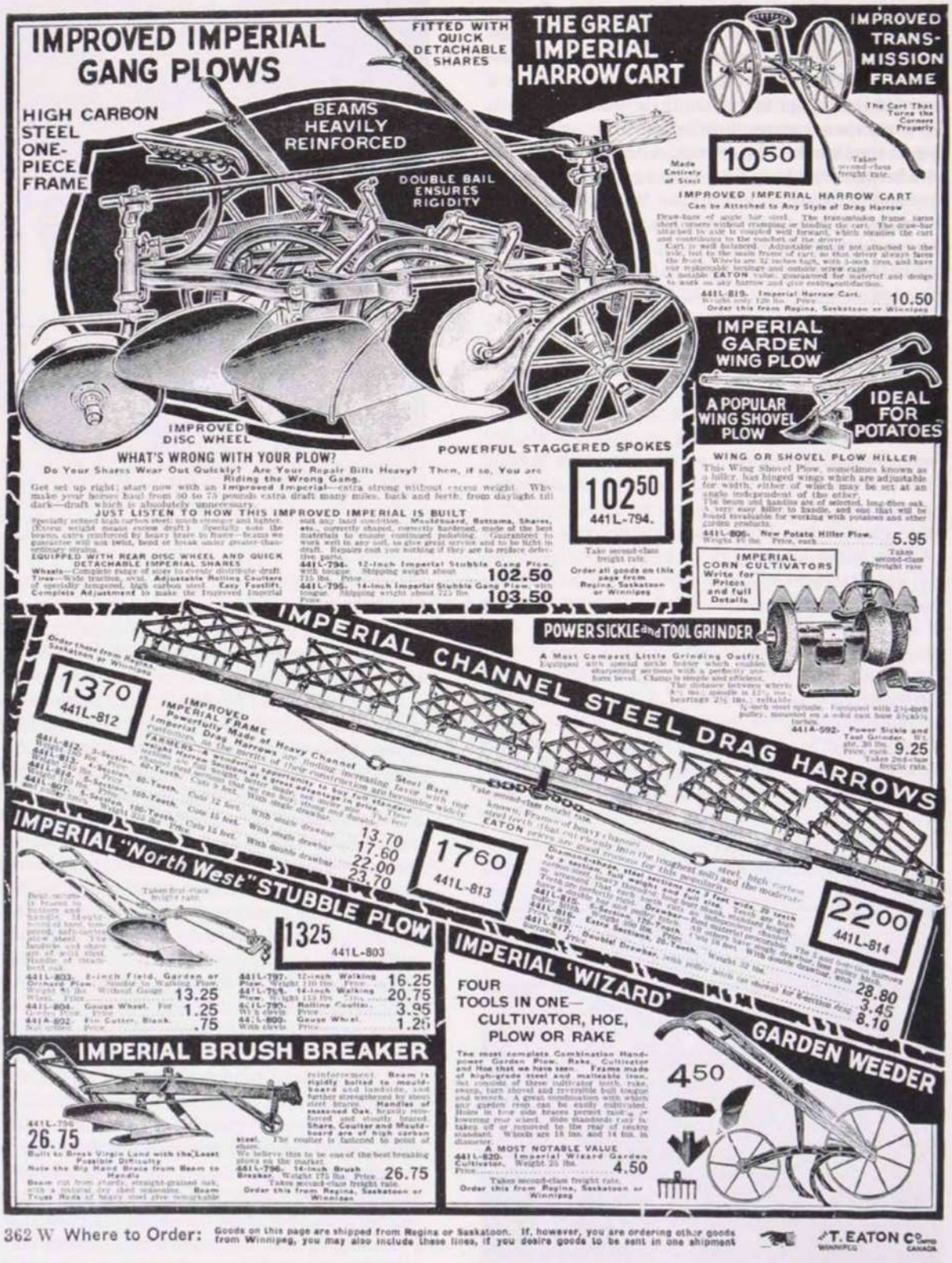
his life, but Comfort followed a different path. This began when Fred Brigden, by this time a respected water colour artist as well as art director of the Toronto firm, was in Winnipeg in 1913 establishing the new branch of the firm. He was asked to judge a water-colour competition at the Winnipeg Y.M.C.A. and awarded the first prize to the thirteen year old Charles Comfort. He subsequently offered him an apprenticeship at the firm for $3 per week. After some difficulty with his parents who had "something more respectable in mind", Comfort joined the Winnipeg firm in November of 1914. He carried out the usual mundane chores of drawing furniture, kitchen-ware and machinery for the catalogue during the day, and in the evenings attended classes given by Alex Musgrove at the Winnipeg School of Art. In 1918 and 1919 he won the Eaton's catalogue cover competition and was able to go to Toronto on the proceeds. There he started working at the Toronto Brigden's becoming, as he said, "a kind of mobile employee, moving back and forth between Toronto and Winnipeg as required." He settled in Toronto permanently in 1926, becoming, in critic Paul Duval's words, "the star commercial designer of the country." He continued working for Brigden's and other graphic arts firms, including his own, until in 1938 he began teaching at the University of Toronto. He was President of the Royal Canadian Academy from 1957 to 1960 and was then appointed Director of the National Gallery, a post he held for the next five years. He became, in fact, an important figure in the history of Canadian art but one who never forgot the debt he owed to the world of commerce. Although he said that he could separate his commercial from what he called his "expressive" work, he is also recorded as saying that the blend between the two had "been a great advantage." It kept him, he said, in touch "with life and men and matters", thus avoiding the isolation from "the facts of life" which can be "one of the greatest weaknesses of painters." Like Winter, he respected the discipline and skills the commercial work had given him.

Calendar painting for the Hudson's Bay Company, 1942, by Charles Comfort.

Also like William Winter, Comfort emphasized the stimulation of association with other artists in Winnipeg, including those not working at Brigden's. Among those who endeavoured to earn a living either commercially or by teaching, were Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and Walter J. Phillips, artists who would eventually become well known both in Canada and abroad. And it is with these two that the name of Eric Bergman is most closely associated: the "Manitoba Three" as they have been called. FitzGerald, who was Winnipeg born, had already had a painting accepted by the Royal Canadian Academy in 1913, and Phillips had arrived in the city from England in the same year. Both concentrated their skills on water colour painting and wood-engraving and both spent most of their lives teaching in order to have an income. When, therefore, Eric Bergman arrived in Winnipeg in 1914 from Toronto, he found artists with compatible interests. Originally from Dresden, he was already trained as a wood-engraver and photo-engraver and was employed by Brigden's straight away. Initially, like everyone else at the firm, he was caught up in the routine of commercial work, but in the 1920s he was encouraged by Fred Brigden and Walter Phillips to extend his operative talents outside his working hours. The result was

H. Eric Bergman: Celastrus Scandens.

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the creation of water colours and engravings which led him to international renown. Unlike Comfort, however, he chose to remain in Winnipeg, working at Brigden's and going on painting trips with his friends. But for both of them, Bergman and Comfort, it is perhaps possible to say that without the support and encouragement of the Brigdens, their art and their careers might not have developed in the way they did in the years between the two world wars. Fred Brigden was a painting companion to them, while Arnold Brigden bought their work and promoted its further exposure.

For Winnipeg artists in the years prior to the Second World War, connections with commerce were obviously essential. Without them, they would have been unable to work. While the School of Art and the Art Gallery gave a formal recognition to the arts, it was in the commercial art houses that artists were able to earn a living and thus keep their skills alive. And in the case of Brigden's, which ended up providing work for so many artists of importance, it owed its existence in Winnipeg to Eaton's decision in 1913 to produce a western based catalogue. But Eaton's gave no recognition of Brigden's, and indeed, from 1914 on began withdrawing some of its work from the Toronto branch. There are comments in the Brigden correspondence which lead one to assume that the Eaton contract was not always reliable, in spite of Fred Brigden's public pronouncements on the privilege of working for Eaton's. There is no record showing that the Brigdens were conscious of the practices carried on by Eaton's during the 1930s, but ex-Brigden employees mention how, with the gradual development of its own advertising and art departments, Eaton's tried to lure artists away from the Brigden firm. In the 1940s, Winnipeg Brigden's was producing more work for Eaton's than the Toronto branch, but in 1948 the whole catalogue production was returned to Toronto. The impression given in the Eaton literature would lead one to suppose that all work was subsequently carried out in these departments: as one ex-employee has said, "large companies play down buying from others". In fact, according to the *Globe and Mail*, Toronto Brigden's was still doing art work for Eaton's in 1970.

The Brigden connection with Eaton's and the catalogue raises a number of interesting issues concerning the inter-relationship between artists and business in general, and between western Canadian artists and commercial work in particular. Because it was essential that the seasonal catalogues appeared on time, speed was the most important factor in its preparation. This meant that the mode of work required of artists working on the catalogue was similar to that of an industrialized work-force committed to assembly-line production in a mechanized situation. Moreover, in spite of the necessary inter-action between all members of a graphic arts firm, there were perceived differences between artists, photo-engravers and other labour related employees. And further, as Canadian art itself became more self-conscious, so a division was implied between artists working in a commercial environment and artists working independently. It is this latter implication that has led to an historical interpretation of artists' commercial involvement as being temporary and unimportant: an unfortunate means to an end. In fact, as has been pointed out, this was not necessarily the case.

The establishment of catalogue production in western Canada affected Winnipeg artists in that it introduced a new form of visual advertising. Although created specifically for western rural needs, the catalogue used the same techniques already practised in Toronto and thus required the same artistic skills from its local employees. For this reason apprentices were trained by art directors brought in from Toronto. What is, however, perhaps of even more significance, is the fact that the Winnipeg School of Art stressed the importance of training students in commercial as well as "fine" art from its inception. Certainly, all the artists who were at Brigden's worked in both fields. It is interesting to speculate on whether this had any aesthetic effect on their interpretation of the prairie environment in their private work. Water colour painting has, indeed, remained an important element of western Canadian art, but as Winter and Surrey and most of the other artists employed by Brigden's before the Second World War subsequently left Winnipeg, their influences have obviously been felt elsewhere.

Finally, in terms of business, it is apparent that the impact of a major client such as Eaton's, while it was instrumental in persuading Brigden's to open in Winnipeg in the first place, did not, in the end, affect the smaller firm's continuity. Winnipeg Brigden's continued after the catalogue production was returned to Toronto. Following Arnold Brigden's retirement in 1956, the firm was run from the east by third generation members of the Brigden family until, in 1963, it was purchased by Frank Ferguson, a long time member of the Winnipeg managerial staff. Ultimately, then, although it cannot be denied that it was Eaton's and the catalogue which prompted the establishment of the Brigden graphic arts firm in Winnipeg, it was the Brigden family which succeeded in providing the conditions within which art and business could work to mutual advantage. ◆

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Parks Canada

HISTORY IN LINE AND COLOUR

By Helen K. Wright

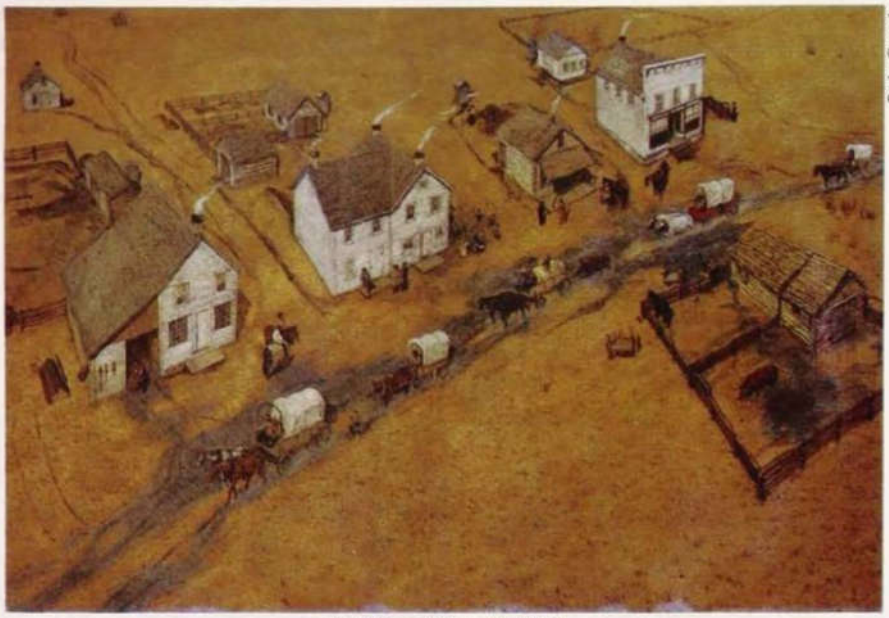
The Batoche paintings of Armand Paquette.

Batoche National Historic Park is located 88 kilometres northeast of Saskatoon on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River. Environment Canada-Parks is currently re-creating the site of Batoche as it was at the time of the uprising of 1885. Armand Paquette, a Métis from Manitoba, was commissioned to produce original artwork for the park. A touring exhibition of Paquette's paintings of Batoche and artifacts from the period, curated by John Pawlyk, had its premiere at the Main/Access Gallery in Winnipeg in the spring of 1987. The show has been seen in various cities in Canada during the past year.

Most of us are familiar with the facts of this particular episode of our frontier history in 1885 — how problems developed, as they had fifteen years earlier in the Red River Settlement, over methods used to survey land, over land titles, representation in territorial and federal politics, demands on the part of native tribes for promises made in treaties, and criticism of Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy and protective tariffs. Métis leaders at first organized meetings and drafted petitions. Ottawa did not respond. Louis Riel was then invited back from his exile in St. Peter's, Montana, to lead the people again. Possibilities for peaceful negotiations waned. The military confrontation at Batoche resulted in 25 dead from both sides, and in the long run, the destruction of the living culture of the village and the locality.

In this informative exhibition, Paquette presents us with extremely realistic, almost photographic representations. Indeed, he reverts in style to a previous era. Before the invention of photography, such detailed paintings were often an integral part of explorations and military campaigns. Paquette's works depict Métis life in Batoche and images of the coming of the soldiers, their activities in camp and the results of the confrontation. As resource materials, Paquette used written accounts and some photographs and layout sketches.

The architecture, daily social life, the importance of transportation, and the severity of the environment are all themes depicted by the artist. A log clapboard house, F.-X. Letendre's, in its pleasing scale and delicate decoration, bears witness to Québecois origin. Letendre's store, with its false front extending above the second story, could form part of the set of a western movie; its locale is made specific, however, by the loaded Red River cart in front, its wheels covered with babiche. Similar buildings are still found and even inhabited, in small communities across the prairies. "Inside Fisher's Store" is a charming interior scene showing the customers the sales items — dry goods and bolts of cloth, and coloured candies for the children. Garnot's "Stopping House", a log cabin, depicted inside and out,



Parks Canada

The Village of Batoche, 1884.

Christmas Mass, Batoche, circa 1896.

Parks Canada

must have been a resting place along the Carlton trail; the proprietor pours drinks for one group of men, while another group plays billiards.

In our highly technological age, we sometimes forget the resources and difficulties inherent in transporting individuals and goods long distances. There is hardly one image here without its transportation details. What is a prairie exhibition (or a prairie novel, for that matter) without a blizzard? In *Caught in a fall blizzard on the Carlton Trail, 1876* the Métis drivers are almost up to their knees in the snow, trying to push their loaded carts through the new drifts. The expressions on the faces of the men and the oxen remind us of what it feels like to have one's breath blown away by wind and snow. The storm doesn't prevent one man, though, from accompanying his children on horseback to Father Moulin's school; the warmth inside the small building certainly feels inviting as the priest holds the door open for the late-comers.

Paintings also depict the arrival of the soldiers and their life at camp. The difficulties are obvious in moving men, four nine-pounders, and a Gatling gun through the rough terrain north of Lake Superior and across the open prairie. Images of the fighting and camp scenes are reminiscent of photographs of the American Civil War. Pack animals and men were wounded and killed at Batoche. Portraits of camp life show the zareba, a defensive device used by the British army throughout its empire. Wagons were pulled into a circle and reinforced with supply boxes. The North West Field Force built their zareba at Batoche upon their arrival to act as a strong point for attack during the day and a defensive protection from a night attack.

Three works particularly struck me — for different reasons. In *Christmas Mass at the church of St-Antoine-de-Padoue, c. 1896,* (see the cover of *The Beaver* for December/January 1986-1987), the simple attractive white church is a Red River frame construction with gothic inspiration. It was built by Ludger Gareau in 1884. This pleasant scene depicts the church-goers arriving on foot, on horseback, and in a horse-drawn sleigh. It has a nostalgic Christmas-card quality, but it isn't sentimental. *The Village of Batoche, 1884,* a large painting, is like an aerial view of the settlement. It has an odd flattened perspective similar to Grandma Moses' work. In *North on Lake Superior*, which has the most impact, a group of soldiers on foot and two on horseback struggle against a strong wind and through deep drifts in a northern landscape. It is like an image seen before. It recalls Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, the Charge of the Light Brigade, and hundreds of other far-flung 19th-century imperial campaigns. From an artistic point of view, it is very successful.

This exhibition documents an event in clear detail without revealing the artist's sympathy for one side or the other. Both groups are portrayed with compassion. It achieves its purpose through pictures and artifacts in bringing to vivid life an episode of our prairie past.

Helen K. Wright is a Winnipeg freelance critic and writer.

Caesars

In your August/September issue of *The Beaver* there is reference to Peter C. Newman's second volume of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. The title *Caesars of the Wilderness* will be very confusing for researchers and librarians. This is the same title as in the classic work by Minnesota historian Grace Lee Nute.

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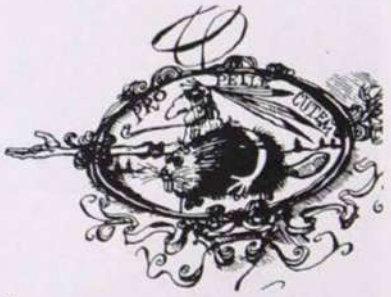


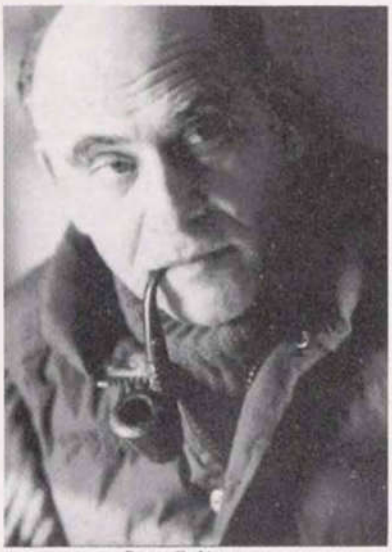
Trading in Mythology

CAESARS OF THE WILDERNESS
By Peter C. Newman. Penguin Books Canada, Markham, 1987. 440 pp., illus. $25.00.

By Robin Fisher

We now have the second of Peter Newman's three volumes on the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. *Caesars of the Wilderness* covers the period of rivalry between the North West and the Hudson's Bay Company leading up to the amalgamation of the two organizations in 1821 and then looks at the operations of the new Hudson's Bay Company during the monopoly phase. The volume ends with the decline of the fur trade in the West and the acquisition of Rupert's Land by Canada in 1869. Embellishing the words of Donald Creighton, Newman makes it clear on the first page that his aim is "to re-create the interplay of feisty characters and remarkable circumstances that shaped the story of the Hudson's Bay Company during the middle century of its existence" (p. xii). By the end, however, it is equally clear that this book contains much more character than circumstance.

The second volume promises to be as controversial as the first. Many fur trade historians will still be very distressed by the picture that Newman paints of the past. Up to a point, such controversy is worthwhile because it makes us all think about Canadian history and the way that it is portrayed. Unfortunately the debate over Newman's work shows every sign of degenerating into a slanging match between the advocates of "popular" and "academic" history, and that is hardly a creative exercise. There is no absolute distinction between popular and academic history, and, even if there were, both forms of historical writing make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the past.



Peter C. Newman

Because I see no point in trading through a narrow hole in a solid wall of misunderstanding, perhaps I should lay my views on the counter in the hope that Newman will at least come into the store. My name is among the group of scholars whom he acknowledges for sharing with him the results of their research on the history of the fur trade. We are referred to as "that magic circle" at the beginning of *Company of Adventurers*, and thereafter more prosaically as "resource people". Whatever the description he uses, Peter Newman has taken no notice of anything that I have said or written and so I do not feel in any way constrained by my attempt to be helpful. Like many others, I tried to assist Newman because I believe that popular writing serves the important function of bringing Canadian history to a wider audience than academics often reach. Yet it is also important to remember that there is good and bad popular history, just as there is good and bad academic history, and neither should be immune from criticism by the other.

Academic historians are sometimes quite rightly taken to task for writing turgid prose and we have all read books in which vast numbers of footnotes and a barrow load of statistics fail to sustain a facile argument. It is probably fair comment that university professors write too much for each other and not enough for the people who ultimately pay their salaries. At the same time, the argument that Canadian history is dull and needs to be rescued by more lively writers has itself become rather tedious, and it is certainly no excuse for any kind of licence. Newman's desire "to extract live metaphors from the Dead Sea Scrolls of Canadian history" (p. xii) may be very commendable, but that does not mean that he should be given a free hand with the past. For their part, popular historians, precisely because they reach a larger audience, bear a responsibility not to trivialize or sensationalize past events and not to dress up their characters with too much of the colour purple. In short, while academic history certainly should be well written, popular history should be well researched and present an authentic view of the past.

Newman outlines his particular approach to the past in the first few paragraphs of the book, and it is a very slippery piece of logic. For an introductory statement on the nature of history he turns to a review of George MacDonald Fraser's latest novel in the *Flashman* series written by someone called Stephen Schiff in the *New York Times Book Review*. It is perhaps not the most obvious source for a conclusive comment on the theory of history, but when you have found a neat quote why waste it? According to Schiff, "At the heart of good history . . . is a naughty little secret: good storytelling. A history that isn't implicitly a colourful, twisty yarn is at best fodder for other specialists" (p. xii). In other words, history is gossip and at that level it can be loads of fun. No doubt old Flashy would cut a wide swath if Fraser were to set him loose on the great Canadian skin game during the earlies. What Newman neglects to tell us, however, is that Schiff goes on in the next sentence of his review to say that, while the creator of Flashman understands the importance of a good yarn, he actually works from the opposite direction. For "at the heart of his vivid story telling is plenty of solid history." Whatever else it is, *Caesars of the Wilderness* is not a novel, so the issue of whether it is solid history cannot be avoided. And Newman's highly selective use of sources is not the only area that deserves scrutiny.

Having pontificated on the nature of history, Newman immediately retreats by saying that he makes no claim to the credentials of an historian. While it may well be that his first pronouncement is a demonstration of the second, I do not think he means it that way. As he says, it is not as an historian but rather it is as a journalist that he writes. I agree with his regard for the "profession of journalism as an honourable craft that requires no apologies" (p. xii). The problem is that one cannot apply the techniques of journalism to the history of the fur trade. Unlike the politicians and businessmen that Newman wrote about in his earlier books, the men and women of two hundred years ago are not available for interviews. Consequently one has to rely largely on documentary sources and the historical method. So, however much Peter Newman may wish to dance around the issue, as far as I am concerned, if he is writing about the past then he is writing history and deserves to be judged as an historian.

Since writing style is partly a matter of taste, reactions will always be somewhat subjective, but Newman's message certainly cannot be separated from his medium. Although he writes for effect, attempting to shock the reader into taking notice, he is often less than effective. His high-voltage, overblown language tends to draw attention to the words on the page rather than the point being made. If they survive the flying trees, readers will decide for themselves whether the phrase "the forests exploded" (p. xvii) conjurs an appropriate image of the intense competition between two fur trading outfits. Or whether we come closer to the reality of the past by comparing the North West Company voyageurs to the Hell's Angels. Or whether "Big Mack", with its allusion to another North American business enterprise of dubious Scottish ancestry, is an effective title for the chapter on Alexander Mackenzie. For my money, Newman's prose is more like a side of fries: there is plenty of bright packaging but not much nourishment.

Moving on to matters of more substance, it is merely axiomatic to say that good history must be based on solid research. Newman's first volume was criticised for his cavalier use of archival sources. Volume two is even less vulnerable on that score because there are precious few direct references to the documents. The primary material is filtered down through secondary sources. That in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. A lively synthesis based on a discriminating use of secondary literature would be a fine contribution to writing on the fur trade. But regrettably Newman does not utilize the best and most recent work. While he certainly drops lots of names in his text, they are names like Frederick Merk, Harold Innis, and W. Kaye Lamb. He cites John Morgan Gray rather than J. M. Bumsted on Lord Selkirk, and Diamond Jenness' *The Indians of Canada*, first published in 1932, is described as a definitive work. All of these scholars made great contributions in their day, but no one's work is definitive and theirs is at least a generation out of date. There are other citations that are just plain silly. Near the beginning of the book Margaret Atwood is quoted on the role of Indian women in preference to Jennifer Brown or Sylvia Van Kirk. We are given the views of Lord Palmerston on Indian drunkenness in western Canada, while Gustavus Myers pronounces on the deliberations of the British parliament's select committee on the Hudson's Bay Company. Through all of this superficial erudition the current scholars, whose recent research has done so much to revise and deepen our knowledge of the fur trade, hardly rate a mention.

Outdated and eclectic as his sources may be, they cannot be blamed for the fact that Newman is also indiscriminate in his use of information. Irrelevant nonsense is given equal time with significant factual information. For instance, the details of John Jacob Astor's table manners would seem to have little bearing on the evolution of the fur trade in the Pacific northwest. Newman's fascination with things American, including presumably the size of its market, is further demonstrated in the three pages of

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information on the American John Paul Jones' foray against the Selkirk estates in 1778. The events seem to have little connection with the fur trade in British North America other than to provide grounds for speculation that the six year old future Lord Selkirk instantly developed a lifelong dislike for all Americans. There is, by contrast, no comment about cause and effect in the footnote detailing the body weight, both individual and cumulative, of the Rowand family.

Nor can Newman's sources be blamed for many of the errors of fact and interpretation. Just to take examples from west of the Rockies, it is impossible to say where he could have got the idea that Captain James Cook visited the Queen Charlotte Islands. Indian slaves were not a major trade item during the maritime fur trade as Newman suggests. The details of the constitutional development of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia are hopelessly mangled. Governor James Douglas, who by the time of his retirement in 1864 had crippled the colonial economy by borrowing heavily to build roads, is described in a chapter heading as a man who "turned parsimony into an art form." (p. 301) Obviously no historian is infallible and we all make mistakes. There comes a point, however, when we must consider the distinction between occasional errors and a careless attitude towards historical fact.

It is often the case that an author who is somewhat *laissez-faire* about handling detail will not be very clear about the larger concepts either, and *Caesars of the Wilderness* is not the exception to prove the rule. Ideas roll around in this book like rocks in a flooded stream bed: they tumble along and occasionally crack together, all a rubble-rattle in the torrent of words. Near the beginning Newman informs us that the North West Company traders "left behind a legacy of alcoholism, syphilis, Mixed Blood babies. . . ." (p. 5). It is bad enough that these three should be uttered in one breath as if they were all of equal significance, but what does one make of the next sentence that asserts that there is also little doubt that the North West Company was the forerunner of Canadian Confederation? Is there a relationship between these two thoughts, or are they merely thrown on the page in the random order that they occurred to the author? The notion that the North West Company was the harbinger of Confederation is also a contradiction of volume one in which that role is attributed to the Company of Adventurers. Indeed, for a book on the Hudson's Bay Company, volume two shows a great deal of sympathy and enthusiasm for the North West Company. As Newman sees it, prior to 1821 and perhaps even after, the caesars of the wilderness were mostly Northwesters. One cannot help wondering, as Newman describes the vigorous and virile Northwesters expanding across the continent while the languid Bay men merely followed along, how it was that the Hudson's Bay Company was able to win the competitive war? The answer is, that at the eleventh hour the Hudson's Bay Company began to imitate the North West Company or, as Newman puts it, "the moribund feudalism of the HBC took on the rampaging capitalism of the Nor'Westers and, in the process of winning, transformed itself into a mirror image of the enterprise it was trying to defeat." (p. 202) This sudden transformation by the Hudson's Bay Company also means that Newman does not have to entertain the possibility that he has totally exaggerated the differences between the two companies right from the start. Since he has paid such heavy dues to the opposition, when the Hudson's Bay Company does receive the author's cheque that he still says is in the mail it might want to take a look at his credit rating.

One point that does emerge clearly from Newman's work is that he sees the history of the fur trade as the story of the daring deeds and fantastic feats of white males. In this heroic age of the fur trade it is European men who "explore" new territory, "discover" new routes and markets, and make the command decisions that determine the patterns of development. The worst feature of this kind of writing is not that it is outdated or overdrawn, but that it does a profound disservice to Canada's native peoples by diminishing their role in the past.

Newman does concede that the decisions made by white fur traders had an impact on the Indians. He allows, for example, that the effects of George Simpson's economy drive after the amalgamation of 1821 were felt by the Indians. It then occurs to him to note that the Indians "were essential to the fur trade, since they did nearly all the work. . . ." (p. 226). But if the Indians were essential to the fur trade, Newman does not seem to think that they are essential to the writing of fur trade history. Although there is the odd admission of their significance, the overwhelming impression of the book is that they merely provided a backdrop to, and perhaps some occasional light relief from, the far more important doings of the Europeans.

The process of demeaning the Indian role in the fur trade is begun whenever Newman writes about the traditional cultures. He has made

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no apparent effort to understand native ways of life and so some cultural elements are reduced to a trivial level while others are sensationalized. Indian spiritualism and ritual "(such as witchcraft, dreams, spirit possession, and so forth)" are described as "*time out* ceremonies" (p. 116) rather than as integral parts of viable cultures. Since it makes for such good copy, the nature of slavery among northwest coast Indians is highly exaggerated. According to Newman, there were regular slave auctions up and down the coast and particularly "near Fort Simpson on the Nass River" (wherever that might be) and he gives the going rates for a "healthy male" and, of course, for "an agreeable female" (p. 274-75). At one level, perhaps, this sort of comment is rather amusing, but at another it is very sinister. Such a derogatory view of their traditional cultures leads to the notion that the Indians were simple-minded savages who were not able to withstand the pressures of European contact, let alone participate as active partners in the fur trade. The definitive Diamond Jenness is quoted on this point to the effect that the "old order changed completely with the coming of Europeans" (p. 114).

In other words, the Indian cultures collapsed under the pressure of the fur trade. Through his familiar technique of using isolated quotes as if they were typical, Newman particularly emphasises the stereotype of the drunken Indian. There is no doubt that liquor was an important trade item, especially during the period of intense competition prior to 1821, and that drunkenness led to violence and also left many Indians susceptible to disease. But to assert that the liquor trade "amounted to the anaesthetizing" (p. 115) of the Indians is to deny that they had any resilience. One wonders how, for example, if the prairies were littered with alcoholic Indians by 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company was able to cut down the liquor trade after amalgamation. Newman does raise, but only to dismiss out of hand, the idea that, because drunkenness had an adverse effect on the trade, Company men might have had good reason to limit the flow of liquor. He does not even consider the possibility that consumption of alcohol must have affected Indian hunting and therefore reduced the fur supply. With scant regard for other interpretations, Canada's native peoples are portrayed, right down to the last sentence of the book, as "willing victims" of the fur trade.

This view of the Indian role in the history of western Canada ignores virtually all of the work that has been done in the last ten or fifteen years on the fur trade. Scholars have been trying to show that, far from being passive victims, the Indians played an active and even a determining role in the trade. The effect of European contact may not have been entirely positive, but native people did not simply curl up and die. It was Indian trading patterns, as much as North West Company explorers, that determined the expansion of the fur trade across the West. Indian demands on the price and quality of goods had to be met before furs changed hands. And the Indians were partners in the birth of the unique fur trade society that both grew out of, and fostered, the economic association between two cultures. There is little sense of the reciprocity of fur trade relations in this book as the European caesars do their thing in what the author is pleased to call a wilderness. Newman may not want to take any notice of recent scholarship on the fur trade, but it seems to me that it is not even good business history to diminish one side of a partnership to the point where it is of little consequence.

It is tempting to dismiss the Newman recipe as merely stirring a bunch of outdated ideas about the fur trade together with some colourful personalities and anecdotes, then serving it up to the reading public as if it were Canadian history. There is, however, more to it than that. At the beginning of *Caesars of the Wilderness* Newman claims that he is writing journalism rather than history, but in a sense this book is neither. It is really mythology. And that is not to say that mythology is unimportant and should not be taken seriously. Obviously it is a significant and potent force in the way in which a society or a nation understands itself. The fur trade was the major economic and inter-cultural activity in the Canadian West through more than two hundred years of its history. By focussing on the twenty or thirty year period when there was the most hostility and conflict and implying that it was typical, Peter Newman seems to be saying that there was as much violence on the Canadian frontier as there was south of the border. Or, to put it more simply, Canadian history is colourful too. This notion may well be based on a mistaken view of western expansion in the United States, but that is another issue. Clearly the success of this book as a commercial product depends to a large extent on its acceptance in the American market. Does that mean that the history of the Canadian fur trade should be made to order? And does Canada, particularly at this point in its history, need to have free trade in American myth along with everything else?

Robin Fisher is Professor of History, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia.

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History, Illustrated

THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF CANADA
Edited by Craig Brown. Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, Toronto, 1987. 574 pp., illus. $39.95.

By J.M. Bumsted

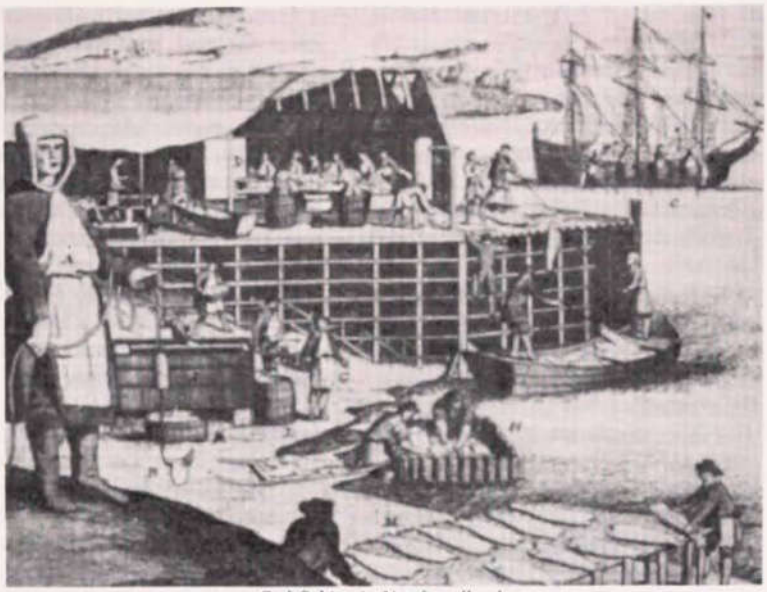
While preparing to begin writing this review, I overheard a discussion between two of my colleagues about the work in question. One quite vociferously declared that he had not bought it and would not read it, since it was merely an exercise in pandering to popular taste in the attempt to make money, and could hardly be taken seriously as a work of scholarship. Of course the authors would like to make money, and there is no reason why academics should be denied the privilege of receiving income from their writing. Only a day or so later, I read an ill-tempered review by one of our leading popular historians condemning the text of the book, basically for being too academic. One wonders whether the reviewer also felt that scholars should stick to their monographs.

The real questions to be asked, of course, are not whether the distinguished authors of this book ought to be attempting to communicate with the general audience at this level, but what kind of a job they have done, and whether the resulting product is a truly successful one. For this book is titled and publicized as an *illustrated* history of Canada, and unlike the typical academic monograph that rises or falls on the text, its impact will depend on the visual as much or more as on the verbal material. A truly outstanding illustrated history, it seems to me, is one that marries text and illustration in an effortless and seamless unity, so that the reader is not conscious when immersed in its contents of the obvious disparities between the resonances of the written word and the pictorial images and iconographies. Such an impression of unity is an illusion at best, but without it the entire project collapses in a heap of words and pictures, a slide lecture — in which the different intentions of the lecturer and the illustrations are all too evident. Bald assertions that the pictures "are intended not just as a page-by-page representation of the text but rather as a parallel commentary" ("A Note on the Illustrations," p. xiii), while provocative, are not sufficient to explain the discrepancies.

Unfortunately, this valiant effort does not exhibit the necessary legerdemain, and, one suspects the authors of the text are going to end up carrying most of the can for the ultimate dissatisfaction of many of its purchasers, when they actually sit down to read it. Without a full understanding of the procedure by which the book was put together, it is impossible to know the extent to which the authors of the text are also responsible for the selection of the illustrations, the writing of captions for them, their placement in the text, and the quality of their reproduction. There was a separate "Picture Editor", who gets less than one page to explain his philosophy behind the choice and placement of visual material, hardly adequate given the issues at stake. But while no synthesis of complex material into a relatively brief space is likely to please everyone — and everyone involved here faced a number of particularly intractible problems in preparing their contributions — the text is consistently better than one might expect in such an endeavour. It may be too academic in style and format, but it is not merely hackwork. It is the illustrative material, and the principles underlying its employment, that to my mind constitute the major problem, with some minor weaknesses resulting from such curious omissions as the absence of any scholarly apparatus relating to the text. Most of these matters are probably publisher's decisions rather than authorial ones, and many undoubtedly reflect the constraints of budget. In the end, this work's greatest limitation is doubtless financial. It is a bargain basement illustrated history on a relative shoestring, not the deluxe version. The publishers have not been blessed with either a multi-million dollar grant or a guaranteed market sufficiently large to justify a monstrous capital investment up front. Unfortunately, financial constraint shows in the final product.

As far as the text is concerned, it has been produced by six of the leading scholars in Canadian history of our generation, their academic credentials trumpeted on the dustjacket and in the publisher's hype. By and large the authors have done a good job in synthesizing for the general reader the latest research in their field. It is good to see a general book surveying Canadian history, for example, that begins with native peoples and takes their history seriously, although Arthur Ray's section on the native peoples (reflecting current trends in scholarship, the term "Indian" almost never appears in this text) really only comes to life when he gets to the western fur trade, a subject that takes up a perhaps disproportionate amount of space in the account. The section on early French Canada by Christopher Moore, the only one of the authors not solidly based in the

academy, is perhaps the weakest in the book, an uninspired plod through the French period that does not — as did his award winning book on the people of Louisbourg — manage to bring these people at all to life. There is too much abstract generalization about the life of the *habitant* and not enough concrete detail. In one of the most inventive and impressive sections, Graham Wynn introduces the reader to the complicated period between 1760 and 1840, using a variety of rhetorical devices to bring the age to life. Wynn's chapter is solidly based on the latest research brilliantly presented, although his decision to eschew both the traditional narrative form and most of the familiar landmark events and developments of his period, while doubtless refreshing to his fellow academics, may make his interpretations both too difficult going and too revisionistic for many readers. Perhaps more than any of the other authors, however, Wynn has written in visual and pictorial terms. His text cries out to be interrupted with apt illustrations, and too infrequently gets them. We shall return to this matter.



Cod fishing in Newfoundland.

Curiously enough, given the tendency in current Canadian historiography to focus on the national period, as well as the obvious bias in the visual record toward the more recent past, this text is heavily weighted toward colonial Canada. The first three of its six chapters or sections take the story only to 1840, and Peter Waite does not get to Confederation — that traditional division in survey courses — until page 314 of a text running to 543 pages. While those interested in colonial Canada may applaud the relative allocation of space that results, it does greatly constrain Waite, Ramsay Cook, and Desmond Morton, especially the last. Again reflecting recent scholarship, Waite places Confederation in the middle of a continuing analysis of the period between 1840 and 1900 rather than viewing it as a major benchmark. His lively analysis, especially of political practices and standards of the era, reads very well. Anecdotes abound and are used to great advantage. Ramsay Cook's coverage of the period from 1900 to 1945 combines the standard political and social history with Cook's inimitable use of Canadian literature as a way of getting at the essence of the society and culture of the time. In conclusion, Desmond Morton offers a breathless gallop through the years since 1945, the text here unfortunately reading more like *The Canadian Annual Review* than do the earlier sections. Writing about our own generations is often difficult, and Morton has not succeeded in finding any convincing handle for his period.

Although the picture sources are dutifully acknowledged at the end of the book, the sources for the many wonderful quotations and anecdotes in the text are nowhere listed, and no bibliography or suggestions for further reading are included. The absence of even minimal scholarly apparatus for the text is, one presumes, a publisher's attempt not to clutter the book with the impression of scholarship. Given the facts that the text constitutes a useful synthesis of recent Canadian academic scholarship, and that this synthesis is its most striking and significant feature, the absence of apparatus appears perverse at best. Perhaps the publisher regards the present edition as a trade book, and plans subsequently a text edition. Certainly in its present form, it is missing a major market.

At the same time, one would have thought that a book so heavily dependent upon the visual image for its appeal would have taken some pains to make sure that its authors discussed the visual aspect of our history in their texts, and approached their material from an iconographic perspective. Regrettably, much of the illustrative material in the text comes itself from the printed word rather than from the pictorial record. The authors quote poetry and analyse novels and memoirs, but for the most part avoid any serious mention of the history of art, illustration, and photography in Canada, except in casual asides in the captions for the illustrations. In fairness to them, even when they set up a visual image, those responsible for the illustrations often fail to take advantage of the opportunity. Two examples will suffice, both from Graham Wynn's chapter. Wynn opens his chapter with a paragraph that concludes with a reference to Benjamin West's painting of the death of Wolfe in 1771, "the most powerful icon of an intensely symbolic triumph for British imperialism . . . ." What a lead-in for an illustration! The painting

is reproduced in the book, and in full colour, but some thirty pages earlier, and there is no cross-reference. A few pages later, Wynn discusses Governor Simcoe's "Chequered Plan" of land surveying, but there is no accompanying illustration at all. This failure to marry text and illustration persists throughout the book.

If illustrative matter is all too infrequently related directly to the text at the point of its appearance, it displays other problems as well. One results from the anachronism and inaccuracy of many of the illustrations, which may be useful as icons and symbols if so treated, but which as historical evidence are totally irrelevant. Another relates to the predictability and banality of a good proportion of the illustrations, closely connected with an unimaginative deployment of an all too limited universe of visual images from our past. A final difficulty resides in the miniaturist black-and-white reproduction of many of the pictures, a product partly of preserving space for texts, partly of cost-cutting — including the relatively modest size of the pages in the book. Let me turn to each of these matters in turn, since they are intrinsic to the vague sense of dissatisfaction I suspect many readers of *The Beaver* are likely to experience as they peruse this volume.

Illustrative material both accurate and visually interesting is not easy to come by until the middle of the nineteenth century. Most books about Canada were published in Europe, illustrated by hack artists who were utterly unfamiliar with the North American environment. Those few artists who worked from American observation often operated under different conventions than those of photographic realism. Not until there came to Canada beginning in the last part of the eighteenth century large numbers of professional soldiers and seasoned travellers, for whom sketching was an equivalent of the later camera, did an accurate visual image begin to emerge. And such people had their own biases. The eighteenth century also saw the expansion of the historical painting, a genre of imaginatively recreating earlier events that had gone unrecorded at the time, that continued among illustrators like C. W. Jefferys long after the introduction of the camera. From such work it is difficult to recapture an accurate visual perception of the past, for much of it tells us more about the artist and his/her contemporary society than about the record. The contributors in this work do, in their captions, attempt to comment upon the obvious inaccuracies, but the fact of the matter remains that most landmark events and ordinary behaviour, as well as the landscapes, were unrecorded by knowledgeable contemporaries. Cartier's meeting with the native inhabitants can be described from his own writings, but to illustrate such an event with a Jefferys recreation is the equivalent of using a modern historical novelist as primary source material. Such illustrations tell us much about the world-view of those that created them, but recapture little of the spirit of the original participants. Some careful discussion of these problems might have been useful somewhere in this book.

The reproduction of many of the most familiar images from our past is briefly justified by the Picture Editor "because they are classic images of our heritage, with no comparable substitutes." While I would concur in the value of "classic images," a consideration of why they are such and what they tell us about our notions of our past would surely have been instructive. Even the classic images are subject to interpretation, however, and *The Illustrated History* usually takes the easiest line. Take, for example, the photograph of a long line of men climbing single-file towards Chilkoot Pass into the Klondike reproduced on page 362. This famous picture is captioned: "The ascent of Chilkoot Pass — 3,500 feet (1,067 metres). North-West Mounted Police waited at the top to check that each prospector had all the required gear and food." It was recently included in an article in *The Beaver*, where Robin Fisher wrote about it:

> Perhaps the most striking, and certainly the most frequently used image of the Klondike gold rush is a photograph of a single strand of men, each with his world upon his back, trudging up the golden stairs: that final, thirty-degree slope that took them to the top of the Chilkoot Pass. Black against the white snow, they appear as shadows, anonymous and insubstantial, yet caught for an instant and forever by the photographer's lens. Each was an individual with a story to tell, but many of them left no other record of the fact that they had made the terrible climb.

Which of the above verbal glosses tells us more about the image I leave to the reader, although each suggests a quite different significance for the picture. The same issue of *The Beaver* contains another article on the Chilkoot Trail that contains a number of equally suggestive photographs to the ascent to the summit one. A colour photograph of portable canvas boats either cached or abandoned high on the pass seems to me to speak volumes about the Klondike Rush and the mentalities of the men who joined it.

In his note on the illustrations, Picture Editor Robert Stacey quotes C. W. Jefferys as observing that "A tangible object cannot lie or equivocate so successfully as a word," adding some warnings about "Official" art. However tendentious Jefferys' statement may be, equally to the point is that pictures do not speak for themselves, but must be explained and interpreted. *The Illustrated History's* caption for the Chilkoot Pass photograph suggests that its importance lies in the fact that the thin line of men funnels into a narrow pass where the RCMP could inspect and regulate them, and certainly the notion that the Klondike Gold Rush was a well-policed and orderly event is both traditional in Canadian historiography and the major point made by P. B. Waite in the accompanying text. But as Fisher suggests, there are other resonances to be teased out of the photograph, and as I have indicated, there are other photographs that could have been used. Not often enough are the laconic captions ade-

quate, and far too infrequently are illustrations/images juxtaposed for effect as are two photographs of Main Street, Winnipeg, one in 1879 and one in 1897, reproduced in the book on p. 364. Given Jefferys' point that artifacts don't lie, one might have expected more illustrations from our material history, particularly regarding costume and tools. The book does not quite succeed in its illustrations in illuminating the written text, either by consistently offering visual confirmation of it or providing a counterinterpretation of it through the pictures and their captions.

Finally, while there are some colour reproductions, they are grouped together sporadically apart from the text, and generally consist of formal "art" never dealt with verbally. Most of the illustrations are in black-and-white, and on the same page as the text. Clarity of reproduction is fairly decent, but many illustrations have been significantly reduced in size and make little real impact. Ironically enough, this book is not an example of that much disparaged "coffee table" publication, although larger page size and the possibility of using colour on every page would have much enhanced the illustrations, if also the cost of the volume.

The Illustrated History of Canada, despite the limitations that prevent it from becoming either a classic or a model of its kind, is fairly reasonably priced and sufficiently evocative to justify its inclusion on the shelves of any Canadian. While few of its readers are likely to be totally satisfied with the work, the effort has been both valiant — and legitimate.

J.M. Bumsted is Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

Commercial Relations

By R. Valdimar Oleson

INDIAN-EUROPEAN TRADE RELATIONS IN THE LOWER SASKATCHEWAN RIVER REGION TO 1840

By Paul C. Thistle. University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 1986. 148 pp. $17.50.

Paul C. Thistle's volume is the second in the Manitoba Studies in Native History Series published by the University of Manitoba Press. As such it fits the goal of the series to provide "new scholarly interpretations of the historical experience of the native peoples in the western interior of North America."

Thistle concentrates on the relationship between the Western Woods Cree who inhabited the area surrounding the present day Cumberland House-The Pas region of the Lower Saskatchewan River and the European traders who invaded their realm as early as the first quarter of the seventeenth century. He challenges the "common assumptions of Indian *dependence* and *rapid cultural change*" which, he contends, have marked the writings of fur trade observers and scholars in the past. The primary error of these writers has been the "inattention to Indian initiatives and perspectives".

To support his case Thistle draws upon a variety of anthropological, sociological and ethnohistorical theories, arguing that the central foundation of the Western Woods Cree society was the "principle of least effort" and the "Zen approach to original affluence". Simply put, the Cree pursued a philosophy which dictated the most efficient use of energy to subsist within a context of limited material desires. The Cree philosophy of life did not encompass the European concept of a market economy, nor did it conform to European beliefs regarding work ethics. According to Thistle, the ways of the Western Woods Cree changed little as a result of contact with the Europeans until the mid-nineteenth century. He contends that the reverse is closer to the truth . . . "Indeed, the entire North American fur trade system was founded on principles derived from Indian social, political, geographic and economic experience".

If there was a dependence, it was a dependence of the Europeans on the Indians for provisions, for protection, and guidance when travelling inland. As for cultural change, it was the Europeans who adopted the Indian ways such as the practice of gift giving. Citing many examples to back up his hypothesis, Thistle makes a strong case to illustrate that the Western Woods Cree had the upper hand in trade relations during the period in question.

Thistle's work makes interesting reading and it will be a valuable addition in the academic realm. Unfortunately its appeal to the general reader will be hampered by its reliance on "sophisticated" theories to present a case which, in the final analysis, requires only a common sense interpretation.

R. Valdimar Oleson is a former Hudson's Bay Company historian.

A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

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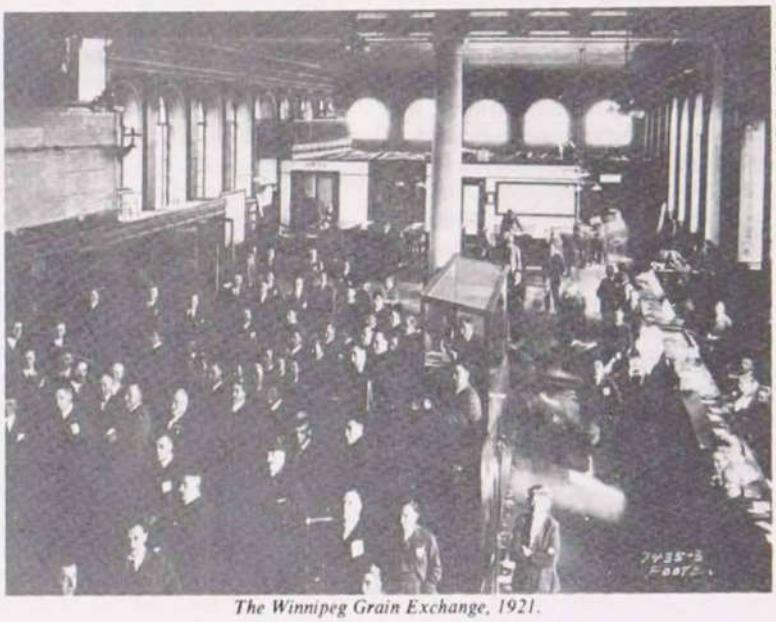
Money and Grain

By Michael Bliss

THE EXCHANGE
100 Years of Trading Grain in Winnipeg

By Allan Levine. Peguis Publishers, Winnipeg, 1987. 278 pp., illus. $24.95.



L.B. Foote Collection

The Winnipeg Grain Exchange, 1921.

In 1932 a grain trader literally lost his shirt during hectic selling in "the pit" at the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. More often, the farmers who grew the grain thought they were being skinned by the commission men and speculators who made the Exchange, in E.A. Partridge's phrase, "a combine with a gambling hell thrown in". Farmers provided the backbone of support for state intervention in grain trading, mainly through the Canada Wheat Board. The Winnipeg [Commodity] Exchange was 100 years old in 1987, but is relatively a weakened shadow of its former self. Its centennial history, written by Alan Levine, is far from the usual celebration of an institution's unbroken successes.

"Over the past hundred years no prairie institution has been more maligned and misunderstood than the Winnipeg Grain Exchange", Levine begins. Some 240 pages later he concludes that "neither the wealth nor the philosophy of the Exchange members has won out. They remain outvoted in the courts of Canadian history". The bulk of his text chronicles endless disputes between grain traders and their critics, innumerable royal commissions on the functioning of grain markets, the steady encroachment of government marketing on the Exchange's business, the institution's search for new products to trade (ranging from canola to gold and potatoes), and its failed propaganda campaigns to convince Westerners of the virtues of free markets.

The Exchange's secrecy and arrogance in its Edwardian hey-day was principally responsible for its bad image, Levine maintains. By the time it stopped ignoring or abusing its critics and tried simply to explain the utilities of efficient, unimpeded markets, no one was willing to listen. "Neither the farmers nor, for that matter, anybody else qualified to hold an opinion on the subject pays the slightest attention to the Winnipeg Grain Exchange or its spokesmen when they put themselves forward as having something of value to contribute to the solution of the problem of grain marketing", a critic said in 1954.

Levine scores many points against agrarian ignorance and self-interest as he summarizes traders' and other experts' arguments to the effect that the Exchange's trading system, including futures trading, usually maximized returns to Western farmers. He does not have enough hard evidence on the actual fluctuations of grain prices on the Exchange, however, to disprove charges that the market and grain prices generally were sometimes rigged by rings of traders. He admits that the Exchange's attempt to fix grain buyers' commissions was tantamount to a combine.

Readers of *The Exchange* may be bothered by Levine's evident uncertainty about his mission. Sometimes he seems to be a commissioned apologist for the institution, sometimes an objective scholar, occasionally a self-conscious student of the Peter C. Newman school of popularization. The book is not in fact very lively, but it does work reasonably well as a history of an important Western Canadian institution. A good centennial project, notwithstanding the ups and downs.

Michael Bliss is the author of Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business.

The Struggles of a Colony

By John G. Reid

LAND, SETTLEMENT AND POLITICS ON EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

By J.M. Bumsted. McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal, 1987. 252 pp. $27.50.

The early development of the Island of St. John — renamed Prince Edward Island in 1798 — has not usually been well portrayed by historians. Authors dealing with the general history of Britain's North American colonies have tended to ignore this island province as being too small to be significant. Those concerned specifically with the Island have often presented the early years as a kind of morality play, in which virtuous residents battled valiantly though unsuccessfully to free themselves from the rapacious clutches of absentee land proprietors. In J.M. Bumsted's *Land, Settlement, and Politics on Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island,* the need for an authoritative reinterpretation is well satisfied. The land question is set in its proper perspective, while the book also rejects the anachronistic notion that the fate of Prince Edward Island was unimportant in a wider context. "In the Island's formative period from the 1760s to the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815," the author observes, "no intrinsic or extrinsic reasons existed to assume that — if properly developed — the Island would be any less populous or prosperous than any other part of the British Empire" (pp. ix-x).

The Island of St. John had a tortuous history of factional infighting, and one of the major achievements of this very readable book is to give these tangled and lengthy disputes their due, without bogging down in unnecessary detail. Among the main characters who emerge are two successive governors, Walter Patterson and Edmund Fanning. Patterson, appointed governor a few days after the Island of St. John gained its autonomy from Nova Scotia in 1769, served until his dismissal in disgrace in 1787. His close sense of personal identification with the Island — "it is my Child," he wrote in a 1784 dispatch to London (p. 123) — did not prevent him from using unscrupulous methods to amass landed wealth for himself and his political allies, and then deliberately muddying the entire land question in an attempt to escape the consequences of his misdeeds. Fanning was also acquisitive, but was more discreet. An expert in "manipulative politics" (p. 140), he ensured his own longevity in office by abdicating any responsibility for resolving the conflicts that continued to tear at the fabric of society. "Fanning survived," Bumsted concludes, "but the price the Island paid was a high one" (p. 200).

In this book, there are no spotless heroes, but there are no stereotyped villains either. The entire political development of the Island of St. John is convincingly portrayed as part of the wider world of colonial British America where "a scrupulously honest man" was a "*rara avis*" (p. 154) and where it sometimes seemed, in the words of an opponent of both governors, that "the most of mankind are rascals" (p. 179). Those who vied for power, wealth, and office on the Island were no better than they ought to have been, and are judged accordingly by the author. Their self-interested manoeuvering, however, is made understandable, if not excusable, by careful delineation of the context in which they operated.

This persuasive account of the political culture of the Island of St. John provides a secure foundation for the book's most important interpretive contribution: a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the origins of the land question. Not until the late nineteenth century would the Island rid itself of the constraints of the proprietary system, by which much of the land was owned by absentee proprietors deriving their property rights from the 1767 lottery held by the British government to divide up the colony. Contrary to the traditional interpretation, Bumsted describes the lottery as "a perfectly comprehensible and even liberal move. . . ." (p. 12), in the context of the rejection of a more elaborate, "semi-feudal" alternative proposal (p. 27). Nor are the proprietors themselves dismissed as brusquely as in many previous treatments of the land question. "Although the proprietorial interpretation should not be accepted uncritically," the author argues, "it does deserve a more serious hearing than it has hitherto received . . ." (p. 197).

To be sure, the proprietors enjoyed no quick success in settling and developing the colony, and as a group they soon fell behind in their obligations to populate their lands and to pay quitrents to the crown. Yet their failure must be seen in the context of their inexperience with the difficulties arising from climate and geography, and of the disruptions caused at a crucial stage by the American Revolution. Most of all, the British decision to create an autonomous Island government in 1769, complete with its own elected assembly — first called in 1773, at a time when it was difficult even to recruit enough members for a jury — ensured that the land question would become embroiled in politics. The real problem with the proprietary system, Bumsted argues, lay not so much in its origins, or in any exceptional greed on the part of the proprietors. It was the politicization of land ownership, entrenched and complicated by the actions of Patterson, Fanning, and others, that made healthy reform difficult to achieve in later years.

This work offers an explanation for the troubled course of Island politics that avoids the anti-proprietary bias of so many earlier

accounts. At the same time, the author takes full account of the social and economic characteristics of the colony. The early struggles of Scottish and English settlers, and the impact of the Loyalist immigration of the 1780s, are analysed in detail. By the time of the census conducted in 1798, the Island of St. John had a population of 4,372. Most lived in cash-poor rural areas, and the economy was "agrarian and unspecialized" (p. 193). The elite was centred in Charlottetown and, although it drew some of its recruits from the lower ranks of society, it remained a small group. In the heat of the quarrels between this resident elite and the absentee proprietors, it was "the legitimate interests of the average inhabitant of Prince Edward Island" (p. 199) that were all too easily sacrificed. Ultimately, the measure of Bumsted's achievement in this book is the force with which he is able to dispose of the old contraposition of righteous residents and grasping proprietors. What emerges is an interpretation that not only makes Prince Edward Island's pre-Confederation history more readily explicable, but also allows the Island to take its rightful place in the larger history of the British Empire.

John G. Reid is Associate Professor of History at St. Mary's University, Halifax.

Memories of the Island

Bathers on the Island shore 1910 (above), from A Prince Edward Island Album.
(Below) Lucy Maude Montgomery, creator of Anne of Green Gables.

A PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ALBUM
By Julie V. Watson. Hounslow Press, Willowdale, Ont., 1987. 111 pp. $27.95.

"The Loon and the Fish" by Kananginak

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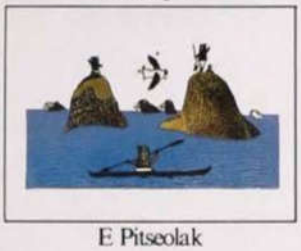

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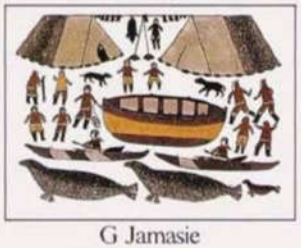

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